

THE PEOPLE AND THE BOOK
A Study of the Popularization of Biblical Criticism
in Britain, 1860-1914

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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

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The history of the Bible in the nineteenth century is largely one of challenge and defense. From the opening years of the century, the veracity and hence authority of the Sacred Scriptures was challenged by advances in science and Continental biblical scholarship, and by the growth of freethinking and skepticism. The conventional believer responded to these challenges not by adapting his views of biblical authority and inspiration, as had been suggested by some British churchmen, but by engaging in a virulent defense of the Bible as the infallible Word of God. Rooted firmly in the apologetic strategy which the orthodox developed in the controversy over Deism, the nineteenth century defense fervently acclaimed miracles and prophecy as the main proofs of divine revelation, and rigorously upheld an accurate, consistent and highly moral Bible. When the higher criticism came to the attention of the British public through Essays and Reviews and the work of Bishop Colenso therefore, it met with hostility and condemnation. A process of reconciliation only took place through the patient labors of William Robertson Smith, S.R. Driver, George Adam Smith and A.S. Peake, who combined an acceptance of the best results of modern biblical scholarship with a devout evangelical piety.

On the basis of the work of these scholars, a movement to popularize the criticism of the Old Testament gained momentum in the last decades of the nineteenth and first decade of the twentieth centuries. A significant number of churchmen believed that the skepticism of the age could be conquered only by teaching the faithful criticism; they produced numerous books, pamphlets, articles and sermons on the subject and its implications. Stress was laid on the difference between the truth of edification and the truth of fact in the Old Testament as well as on the reforming rather than predictive nature of biblical prophecy. The fact that criticism and piety were a viable combination was also strongly emphasized in five particular ways: by showing that many critics adhered firmly to the inspired nature of the Bible; by showing that they did not hold anti-supernaturalist prejudices; by illustrating that criticism had lost much of its original dogmatic nature; by insisting that criticism had a long history in the Christian Church, and finally, by showing that criticism had increased the value of the Bible for the ordinary Christian. The final stage in this popularization process was the recommendation and use of certain "tools" - commentaries, biographies, histories - to assist laymen in understanding the date, origin and context of specific Bible passages.

Many churchmen believed however that an even more effective means of popularizing higher criticism was in the classrooms of the day and Sunday schools. The traditional methods of Bible teaching as well as the Education Act of 1870 left religious instruction in a chaotic state. Modern educational psychology

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as well as the growth of skepticism revealed glaring deficiencies in a system which stressed facts and morally dubious stories, and which took little account either of the nature of the child mind or of the biblical material. A critical approach to the Bible however appeared to be a viable solution. Lesson guides for pupils and teachers, edited Bibles, commentaries and books on the whole concept of biblical instruction were produced in abundance. They urged that the religious and literary nature of the Old Testament be emphasized with children, and brought to the attention of teachers the fact that the development of the biblical literature as revealed by the higher criticism matched the development of the child. Thus, the young child should be told the myths of ancient Israel, the older child tales of the great Jewish heroes, and the adolescent, the message of the prophets. Teachers were not to be afraid, even at an early stage, to introduce the simple facts of documentary analysis to children.

The traditionalists were outraged at the popular critical material, but they were even more angered at the attempts to use biblical criticism in the teaching of young people. A massive campaign was launched therefore to halt the spread of critical views. The traditionalists sought to refute criticism by appealing to the common sense and ordinary intelligence of laymen. Much was made of the distinction between the layman and the expert, who could not act as a judge upon the biblical material because he was blinded by certain "anti-supernaturalist and Hegelian" prejudices. Also, the critics appeared to depend on some mysterious inner consciousness which verified the faith they professed. The critics ignored the "facts" of history and of normal human behaviour when it came to judging the Jewish Scriptures. Also, the traditionalists turned frequently to the teaching of Jesus as a final court of appeal in critical matters.

The most frequently used argument in the popular debate over criticism however was that set out on the basis of archaeological discoveries from the East. The traditionalists capitalized on popular interest in the Holy Lands which had been developing through increased travel and exploration, the work of Christian missions and the marvellous confirmation of the Bible which the customs and geography of these lands were providing. The science of archaeology made major advances during the same period in which the critical studies were being popularized; the ancient monuments were interpreted as a gift from God, refuting the assumptions and conclusions of the critics and vindicating the accuracy and authority of the Bible. Archibald Henry Sayce, a prolific writer and outstanding Assyriologist, chose the weapons and led the assault on the higher criticism in this aspect of the popular debate. The traditionalists were confident that they were the victors, but their arguments were often noticeably weak, based as they were on a misunderstanding both of criticism and archaeology, and of the difference between direct and indirect archaeological testimony.

I have concluded that, despite the magnitude of the attempt to popularize criticism, there were certain features of the critical approach and the popular mind which probably prevented any widespread assimilation of critical methods and results. These include the emphasis of the critics and their sympathizers on religious experience and edifying truth in understanding the biblical revelation; the contrast presented to this emphasis by the "factual" truth preferred by the public and offered by writers such as Sayce; and finally, the excessive optimism displayed by the popularizers with regards to the future of New Testament criticism and the viability of a Christocentric solution to the pressing problem of authority.

PREFACE

The thesis which follows has as its purpose an examination of the attempts to popularize the higher criticism of the Bible as well as a consideration of the debate generated in order to refute, on a popular level, the conclusions of biblical scholars. The primary sources bearing directly or indirectly on this topic are considerable, and have thus made it necessary to draw some parameters. The popular material I have surveyed in chapters II to V falls chronologically between the publication of Essays and Reviews and the outbreak of the First World War. Essays and Reviews and the debate which followed its appearance was the first widespread public awakening to the methods and conclusions of the higher critics. For economic and political reasons, 1914 marked the ebbing of the flow of popular religious publication which had gone on earlier in the century. Also, after the outbreak of the war, the high-water mark of German influence upon British theological opinion and biblical scholarship had passed. Finally, it must be said that the theological liberalism, in whatever form, upon

which many of the popular publications advocating biblical criticism depended, was submerged by the events of the First World War. The post-war social and theological climate became increasingly inhospitable to some of the basic assumptions of liberalism.

The following discussion is also confined to the Protestant churches in Britain. The Reformed Jews at the end of the nineteenth century did in some instances teach the higher criticism in their synagogues, but the publications which resulted were minimal. One notable exception was the work of Claude Goldsmid Montefiore. His Bible for Home Reading attained a wide circulation, as did his articles in the popular press addressing the issue of faith and criticism. The work of Roman Catholic scholars and churchmen played little part in the popularization process for a number of reasons. Anti-Protestant zeal often led priests throughout the nineteenth century to discourage direct contact with the Scriptures by laymen. Also specialists confronting the biblical question later in the century met with strong opposition from the Church hierarchy. The early part of the pontificate of Leo XIII (1878-1903) brought great advances in scholarship to the Roman Catholic Church, but the Pope later began to draw back from what he regarded as "dangerous consequences". The 1893 encyclical Providentissimus Deus set forth a rigid view of biblical inspiration which forbade the narrowing of inspiration to certain passages of Scripture, or the admission that the sacred writers had erred in any

sense. Leo's successor, Pius X, proceeded even more resolutely against the new tendencies, issuing the encyclical Pascendi Dominici Gregis against modernism and the higher criticism in 1907. The encyclical Spiritus Paraclitus of 1920 resulted in stifling progressive biblical study until the early 1940's.

My study of the popularization process also necessarily focuses on the Old Testament. By the end of the nineteenth century, progress in Old Testament scholarship had made far greater strides than that concerned with the New. A basic framework of critical conclusions was almost universally accepted by those sympathetic with the higher criticism, and this framework, it was believed, could be taught and built upon with confidence. The popularizers were in possession of certain theories which appeared to explain many of the historical and literary problems connected with the ancient literature. Work on the New Testament however had swung from the radicalism of the Tübingen school to the technical and conservative work of the Cambridge Trio, leaving open a host of questions which were just beginning to emerge at the end of the nineteenth century. Also, as the popularization process tended to stress the apologetic value of criticism, it was only natural that the Old Testament, under such persistent attacks from science, determined the contents of many critical introductions. Finally, it cannot be denied that the courage which some churchmen showed in propagating Old Testament criticism faltered when it came to the Gospels and the Epistles.

My thesis focuses on the critical study of the Pentateuch and the prophetic literature primarily for purposes of limitation. The critics did a considerable amount of work on the Psalms, refuting the traditional ascription of the Psalms to David and raising questions about the authority of Jesus for the conventional believer. Critical work on the Psalms however attracted only minimal attention in the popular introductions, and suggested many of the same implications which a study of the Pentateuch and the prophetic literature also involved. To average believers, investigation into these latter two areas threatened the whole basis of salvation history as well as the proofs for the belief that the Bible is the divine revelation of God.

Determining what is "popular" rather than "scholarly" material has at times been a difficult task. I have however used several specific criteria which, in combination, present a reasonable case for the inclusion of some books and articles in the thesis. I have avoided publications which were directed solely towards clergymen and theological students, as they tended to presume a certain degree of theological and linguistic sophistication. I have also selected material on the basis of format, length and vocabulary. The number of editions through which certain books went and their coverage, in terms of reviews and recommendations in the popular periodical press, have been considerations. The circulation numbers of periodicals and newspapers as well as information yielded in publications

such as the Publishers' Circular has also been helpful. Finally, the fame (or infamy, as the case may be) of the authors of the popular material has featured in my considerations. Some idea of the position held and influence wielded by the authors may be acquired from the biographical appendix at the end of the thesis. I should mention here that some of the women included, though in many cases prolific writers for children and young people, kept discreetly in the background of Victorian society and hence yield little direct biographical information. Although my thesis deals with biblical criticism in Britain, I have seen fit to include several American authors whose works were both published in Britain and/or extensively reviewed and commented upon in the British religious press.

Kitson-Clark, in An Expanding Society: Britain 1830-1900, makes a useful analysis of the population in nineteenth century Britain, in terms of literacy, which is applicable to the years which the main thrust of this thesis covers. He divides the population into three categories: the illiterates who inhabited the country districts of Britain and the desolate streets of urban slums; the working class literates who possessed rudimentary reading skills sharpened mainly by sensational novels and violent newsprint; and finally that large section of the public which consumed more "civilized" reading matter. It is likely that this last category included representatives from all social and economic classes except,

perhaps, that of the unskilled laborer and agricultural worker. Here was a group of people who were articulate and responsive to the movements of opinion and thought in the nation, and thus was most affected by and involved in the debate over higher criticism.

Although the Bible in the nineteenth century has proven a fruitful topic for many research projects, a study of the popular lay-oriented material of the day is in some sense a new venture. There are inevitably areas which could be more fully and profitably developed. I am thinking here of the concurrent developments in educational psychology and religious education, with special reference to biblical studies; the role which anti-German feelings played in the popular reaction to higher criticism; and the attitudes of the conventional believer towards the Bible in the middle of the nineteenth century.

There are many people who become involved, willingly or unwillingly, in a research project of this magnitude. I would like to express my particular thanks to my supervisor, Professor A.C. Cheyne, to Mr. John Howard and Mr. Ian Hope of New College Library, to the staff of the National Library of Scotland and of Speer Library, Princeton Theological Seminary, and finally to my husband Fraser.

Chapter I

THE BIBLE IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Laying the Defenses: Orthodoxy vs. Deism

To begin a study of the popularization of higher criticism with the controversy over Deism may appear at best peculiar and at worst irrelevant. The controversy was not popular in the sense of reaching a wide audience, as that aroused by Thomas Paine did later in the century. The works involved were usually lengthy and scholarly tomes generally not read by the ordinary man. Nor was the material which grew out of the debate truly "critical", for those who produced it lacked necessary insights into the meaning of history so crucial to criticism in the nineteenth century. The debate however was of major significance: in it the orthodox defined and defended the beliefs with which they went into battle over the Bible in the nineteenth century. It is here that we see the roots of the certitude which marked conventional Christianity in that century, as well as the origin of those doubts and misgivings of a religious nature which came to disturb more and more believers. It is to this controversy that we can trace

a tension between what were regarded as indisputable proofs for an infallible Bible and the challenges which were appearing to be increasingly successful.

The controversy over Deism proved to be of great significance for the theological foundations of Christianity. During its course questions as to the existence, shape and verification of a special revelation from God were probed. The early eighteenth century "produced the first great challenge to the supremacy of that 'Christian epic' which heretofore dominated Western civilization for more than a millennium".¹ As a result of this challenge, fundamental questions were raised and answered; a religious position was established which looked to reason for its verification and which sowed the seeds of its own destruction. The right to free inquiry and the unrestricted reign of individual reason, acclaimed by Deist and Christian alike, created a situation in which the Bible was discussed like any other piece of literature. The dispute drew attention to and examined prevailing beliefs on the Bible, and determined the pattern of defense which conventional Christian thinking was to adopt for two centuries. Yet the fact that such a defense was necessary, as well as the conclusions on which it depended, was enough to distress a growing number of believers who confronted the pages of the sacred book.

The theological atmosphere fostering the controversy was one in which faith was regarded as a series of propositions to be proven true by rational argument. Reason was the high court to which believer as well as heretic

appealed. The orthodox Philip Doddridge sounded the keynote of the age when he claimed: "It is certainly the duty of every rational creature...to bring his religion to the strictest test, and to retain or reject the faith in which he has been educated as he finds it capable or incapable of rational defence."² The world was a rational one and man was a rational creature; it followed that religion must be rational as well. The argument therefore was really over whether or not Christianity could answer such a requirement. Mark Pattison later claimed of the age:

Rationalism was not an anti-Christian sect outside of the Church making war against religion. It was a habit of thought ruling all minds, under the conditions of which all alike tried to make good the peculiar opinions that might happen to cherish. The Churchman differed from the Socinian and the Socinian from the Deist, as to the number of articles in his creed; but all alike consented to test their belief by the rational evidence for it.³

Men were attracted to the standard of reason between 1690 and 1740 for several reasons. Rational religion was in the first instance the product of a particular heritage. It was a reaction against the consequences of "enthusiasm" which had been dominant in the heyday of the sectaries around 1650. The previous century had left as its legacy an ineradicable fear of fanaticism in any form; throughout the century the episcopal mind was therefore particularly sensitive to the claims of special revelation.⁴ Equally repugnant however was Roman Catholicism. If the "weird anarchy of private enthusiasm"

was to be avoided, so was a blind obedience to the authority of Rome. Even tradition was not to be the basis of religion but only a supplementary guide to aid in the process of educating believers. Stromberg concludes, "A combination of causes had paved the way for a period in which religion, still regarded as of vital importance, was to rest on reason, not enthusiasm; to be safeguarded by the pen and not the sword."⁵ Once the witness of the spirit and the authority of the Pope or tradition had been ruled out, there were no other alternatives: "If there was one great gamble in the reliance on reason, it was an inevitable one: the other games were all closed out."⁶

Eighteenth century churchmen were encouraged in their choice by the prevailing intellectual climate. Reason meant for them not the scholastic obscurities of past ages, but lucidity and common sense, the "clear and distinct ideas" celebrated by John Locke. Locke had challenged the whole concept of innate ideas, arguing that even the idea of God was not inborn but was the result of sense impressions stored in the memory and arranged in the mind. Ideas were dependent upon external evidence, and in the case of Christianity the most powerful evidence was that of miracles. Rejecting elements of mystery and enthusiasm, Locke opted for a faith which was clear, simple and rational.

His caution, his unwillingness to believe except on the basis of solid proof, his contempt for metaphysical 'fiddling', his disparagement

of idle and baseless speculation, of the abstract without tangible content - all this was the new spirit, the ore of Bacon and Descartes tempered in the crucible of war and inspired by rival fanaticisms. But it did not exclude religion. Locke clung to the belief that we can know ethical and religious truths...⁷

It was an argument sincerely offered in defense of faith, but it contributed, when probed more deeply, to faith's demise.

Also influential at this time was the thinking of Sir Isaac Newton, who claimed that when a man penetrated the secrets of nature, he found clear evidence for the existence of God. The orderliness of the natural world meant for Newton not only a Designer but a Sustainer as well; not only a Deity who set the world in motion, but One who kept it going. In a well-known passage Newton spoke of Nature's God:

not/ Does it appear from Phaenomena that there is a being incorporeal, living, intelligent, omnipresent, who in infinite Space, as it were in his Sensory, sees things themselves intimately, and thoroughly perceives them, and comprehends them wholly by their immediate presence to Himself?⁸

Important to most believers was the fact that men such as Newton as well as Locke were religious men, making it clear in their investigations that reason was the ally and not the enemy of religion.

The external evidence on which the reason could operate was provided by the natural world. Orthodox churchmen did not reject natural religion, as a book by William Wollaston in 1722 made clear. The Religion of Nature Delineated examined the extent to which reason

and nature alone could lay bare the foundations of religious truth. Not intending to encourage Deism, Wollaston nevertheless gave an important role to human reason:

And then since there is religion, which follows from the distinction between good and evil; since this distinction is founded in the respect which mens acts bear to the truth; and since no proposition can be true, which expresses things otherwise/as they are in nature: since things are so there must be religion which is founded in nature, and may upon that account be most properly and truly called the religion of nature or natural religion.⁹

Reason and nature alone therefore could discover a great deal about God: here his existence, divine Fatherhood and attributes were discovered as well as the duty of the individual towards God and man. Indeed, it was the fundamental assumption of all the orthodox apologists that natural religion was "no meagre affair", but had provided men with a large quota of religious necessities.¹⁰

Reason did not however provide men with enough "necessities" to lead them to salvation and eternal life. Bishop Gibson for example, while emphasizing the importance of reason, warned his people that by itself it "is an insufficient guide in matters of religion."¹¹ It was here that a contradiction arose. Reason, so highly regarded, was shown to be inadequate by some and distorted by others. Believers had to make an effort to show in a variety of ways that revealed religion was "plainly wanting" and then, that it was actually given. Natural religion had to be supplemented by the special revelation of God in Jesus. For those living centuries after his

earthly ministry, this meant through the Bible, as it was here that men could find the pure and unadulterated teachings of Jesus. The "impregnable rock" of Holy Scripture provided the only reasonable alternative to private enthusiasm and popery. The light of nature, declared William Berriman, provided natural religion with its truths, but this light is synonymous with reason and exposes its defects. It could supply basic ethical insights, but it could not instruct men in the more searching duties which the Gospel inculcates.¹²

With regards to the Bible, reason's primary task was to determine whether or not the Scriptures were truly the divine revelation of God. The special authenticating proofs by which revealed religion was established were miracles and prophecies. "Miracles and prophecies are the two main pillars on which revelation is built," claimed John Jackson. "These show the immediate supernatural power and wisdom of God to be concerned in it. They are evidences of the truth of it which are infallible and cannot fail to have effect."¹³ In the polemic of the period therefore we find long and labored sections devoted to the argument from miracles and the argument from prophecy. An immense amount of learned energy was spent especially in examining the evidence for the fulfillment of prophecy, passage by passage and verse by verse. The proof was regarded as an important - and invincible - one:

The argument from prophecy is certainly a very strict and conclusive evidence of the

truth of revelation; nor can it be subverted unless it be shown either that the books were posterior to the times in which they are said to be wrote; or that the original books have been interpolated and corrupted.¹⁴

Prophecy did not stand alone but was intimately associated with miracles. The defenders of Christianity claimed that miracles were facts, "and the evidence for the truth of them is of exactly the same nature with the evidence for all other facts". Miracles were not contrary to the principles of reason, since men were in no position to judge what might be natural under different conditions. Samuel Clarke gave the following exposition:

The true definition of a miracle...is this... that it is a work effected in a manner unusual or different from the common and regular method of Providence, by the interposition of either God himself or of some intelligent agent superior to man, for the proof or evidence of some particular doctrine, or in attestation to the authority of some particular person.¹⁵

After passing judgment on the authenticity of the Word of God (and the orthodox were confident that it would be favorable), reason then had to determine the exact meaning of revelation. In rational religion there was no room for contradiction or obscurity, and only limited room for mystery; what the orthodox wanted was the plain sense of the matter. The alleged harmony between reason and religion resulted in certain propositions about the interpretation of the Scriptures. These have been described as the following:

- (1) The evidence in favor of the divine authorship of the Christian Holy Scriptures

could scarcely be doubted by a reasonable man.

- (2) Within this body of revealed truth there were no internal contradictions, and nothing contrary to reason, though there were some things above human reason.
- (3) The meanings in this body of revealed truth were sufficiently clear and unambiguous, at least in all the essentials of religion, to enable all reasonable men to arrive at substantially the same interpretation.¹⁶

Whatever else orthodoxy may have been in the early decades of the eighteenth century, it was optimistic. Churchmen were convinced that their religion would be strengthened by rational examination, and that the above propositions could be satisfied easily. In retrospect, the pitfalls are obvious. As the Deist Anthony Collins remarked, "No one doubted the existence of God until Dr. Clarke strove to prove it."¹⁷ The orthodox were to receive a number of shocks, especially when it came to subjecting the Bible to the scrutiny of reason. It was on this area of apparent weakness that the Deists focused their attack.

The Deists agreed with their orthodox opponents that religion should be rational and should promote virtue, but they saw no necessity for a special revelation such as Christianity claimed to be. Natural religion alone was sufficient to inspire a virtuous life, and its propositions could easily harmonize with the demands of rational thought. The claim that Christians possessed a special revelation in the Bible was clearly false because the Bible failed to stand up to the tests of ra-

tional inquiry. The controversy as conducted by the Deists involved primarily an attack on the Bible and particularly upon the main proofs set out for its divine inspiration: prophetic fulfilment and miracles.

A press which was becoming increasingly free as well as a growth in the spirit of toleration provided an atmosphere in which the debate between Deists and churchmen flourished for half a century. From the beginning the controversy was provoked by differences of opinion over exactly how far Christianity as it was commonly conceived was a reasonable religion. John Toland's Christianity Not Mysterious, published in 1696, was the "signal gun" for the debate.¹⁸ Inspired by John Locke's Reasonableness of Christianity, the book attempted to reform traditional Christianity by divesting it of any mysterious elements, as mystery was contrary to reason. A number of other publications quickly followed. The Deists believed that they occupied the ground between Christianity and atheism. They generally accepted some First Cause who was shown by the natural world to be a God of wonder and majesty. Jesus was an excellent moralist, although the moral code taught by him could be learned easily from the natural world. There was, therefore, no reason to suppose that Jesus was some superhuman agent through whom God was specially revealed. This idea was clearly shown to be a false one when the records upon which it was based were examined. The Bible quickly became the

focal point of the debate, as Anthony Collins succeeded Toland as the most prominent representative of Deism.

Collins, a country gentleman and disciple of Locke, became involved in the controversy in 1713 with his Discourse on Freethinking. A regular attender of the Church of England, Collins expressed genuine doubts in the book about orthodox Christianity, and advocated freethinking in religion as essential for a reasonable faith. The book raised a great storm, and Collins was forced to take refuge for a time in Holland. He returned to the debate in 1724 however, this time with a work declared by Warburton to be "one of the most plausible ever written against Christianity". It was in response to William Whiston's "Essay towards restoring the true text of the Old Testament, and for vindicating the citations made thence in the New Testament". Although a learned and distinguished mathematician, Whiston was variously regarded as a "childish theologian" and a "dealer in theological curiosities".¹⁹ He claimed in the essay that the prophecies used by the Evangelists and Apostles in the New Testament were clearly given a different meaning than they originally possessed in the Old. Wishing to defend the literal fulfilment of prophecy and to reject allegorical interpretation, Whiston claimed that the Jews had corrupted the Old Testament text early in the Christian era in order to evade the inferences drawn from the original material.²⁰ By admitting that the prophecies as they stood were not

enough to support Christianity, Whiston inadvertently gave the freethinkers an unexpected rallying point. Collins was not slow to take advantage of this.

In A Discourse on the Grounds and Reasons of the Christian Religion, Collins claimed that Whiston's procedure of clipping and rearranging the prophecies to make them fit the events was preposterous but necessary if the prophecies were to be taken literally. He made several points which dealt a severe blow to the argument from prophecy: he claimed that the fulfilment of prophecy was essential to the truth of Christianity, as it was the Old Testament alone which could provide the credentials of the faith. Yet one could not argue for the literal fulfilment of prophecy since in so many instances the predictions obviously refer to matters other than Christianity. The text of the Old Testament was corrupt, but it could not be restored. One was left therefore with allegory as the only possible solution. It was one that Collins, like Whiston, rejected since it introduced an element of mysticism and enthusiasm into a scheme of rational argument. Thus, a religion based on the fulfilment of prophecy had no secure foundations.

Collins' Grounds and Reasons "struck at a sore place and hit it hard".²¹ It created a sensation and provoked thirty-five replies in two years. The most weighty, Edward Chandler's Defence of Christianity from the Prophecies of the Old Testament, and the most popular, Bishop Newton's Dissertations on the Prophecies, offered

little new in the area of apologetics. The orthodox remained loyal to a defense which, through exegetical manou-
vering, was able to prove the fulfilment, clearly and
literally, of at least some of the prophecies. Such
partial proof was taken as sufficient to vindicate the
divine authorship of the entire Bible. Chandler set out
twelve passages which he believed were literally fulfilled,
assuming that to prove that a prophecy related to a cer-
tain event was to prove that the prophecy was intended
for that event. Newton also offered only a recapitulation
of the traditional scheme of prophecy and fulfilment.

By 1740 the controversy had generally subsided. It is
true that the Bible was left in a weakened position, but
the external evidence on which it rested had only been
questioned and had not been disposed of in a decisive
manner. Leslie Stephen evaluated the debate as an argu-
ment about facts in which both sides were unaware of the
most important evidence and unskilled in true critical
method. "The issues are wrongly stated and insufficiently
argued. No blow is struck on either side during the
whole controversy to which the feeblest modern antagonist
does not know the ordinary - perhaps satisfactory - reply."²²
These "religious radicals" really possessed only crude
tools of scholarship. It is true that a few of the Deists
came remarkably close to the positions later occupied
by the higher critics: In reply to Chandler's Defence
of Christianity Collins attacked the authenticity of
Daniel, observing that the clear knowledge of events down

to the age of Antiochus Epiphanes and no further indicated that the writer lived at the time of the tyrant. Hugo Grotius, a champion of Christian tolerance and an objective approach to the Bible, urged that the date of origin of the biblical books, especially Daniel and the Pentateuch, must be inferred from the books themselves rather than from the traditions about them. The rationalist Conyers Middleton, rejecting both Deism and orthodox Christianity, suggested that sacred history be studied in the context of secular history. "In his keen-sighted historical method the higher criticism had been born, though it would be a long time maturing."²³

Middleton's method of historical criticism was a concept alien to both the Deists and the churchmen of the early eighteenth century. In their handling of prophecy, for example, neither side considered the material with reference to the prophet's own circumstances. It was assumed that prophecies referred to future events. The Deists argued that they had not been fulfilled, or that they were either later interpolations or deliberate fabrications; their opponents argued the reverse. They all revealed the same tendencies when it came to dealing with the historical books. The Deists accepted all the events described in the Old Testament while rejecting their conventional source. "The Deists, one might almost say, admitted the miracles, but attributed them to men instead of to God."²⁴ Sharing no concept of historical development, they held for example that the political institutions of

Israel had been invented all at once by legislators and priests, whereas the orthodox claimed that they were dictated by God. Each side believed that it was successful in proving its concept of revelation and in refuting the arguments of its opponents.

Yet despite their lack of critical apparatus, the Deists left the Scriptures in a considerably more weakened position. S.R. Greenslade has described the debate as "a polite disputation between educated and comfortable contestants, most of whom were prepared to admit that much could be said on both sides."²⁵ It has also been claimed however that few movements in English thought have held the attention of the public for so long:

Deism appealed to an audience far wider than any which was normally reached by religious controversy. It was as eager to change the outlook of the ordinary reader as to modify the views of theological experts. The Deists wrote in the easy informal style made popular by the coffee houses, and they gave the impression that they were addressing a public alert to current intellectual issues. They transferred religious debate from the study to the drawing room.²⁶

While it is unlikely that the intricacies of the debate on prophecy or the Trinity became common currency, what did filter down to the popular level was a general atmosphere of uncertainty and questioning regarding the Bible. It was an atmosphere not easily ignored. "Even if every argument of the Deists had been routed, whether by taking refuge in allegorism or by refuting it by superior dialectic, the damage had been done. Something that had been largely sacrosanct had been discussed,

attacked and defended as if it were common man-made philosophy."²⁷ If contradictions had to be explained away for example it was only natural that ordinary men would come to believe that they existed. It was the same with numerous other attempts to save the faith by subjecting it to rational scrutiny. As Dr. Johnson recalled, "These were years when the Apostles were tried once a week for forgery and acquitted." It has been added that the litigation at least gradually damaged their reputation.²⁸

The attempt to defend Christianity as a set of reasonable propositions left orthodoxy in a position that was far from secure. The way was left open for many future difficulties, as freethinkers and scholars capitalized on the weaknesses unintentionally exposed by churchmen themselves. Orthodoxy, at the end of the debate, "stood firmly entrenched behind its battlements, but the breaches in the walls had been repaired with such makeshift materials that a few well-placed shots in the next engagement would lay its defences wide open."²⁹ Stephen described the situation thus:

The result of all this is that, in witnessing the assault and the attack, we are beset by a strange sense of unreality. Theologians are striving to support the existence of a set of phantoms placed in an uncongenial atmosphere, where their ultimate doom is certain, and fancying that they have won a decisive victory...³⁰

The only way out of the rationalistic dilemma for believers proved to be the more sophisticated historical and literary studies of the higher critics, in which the

human element in biblical authorship was given a significant role.

The defense systems which rational religion erected were repeatedly used and popularized during the remainder of the eighteenth century and the nineteenth century. The numerous difficulties associated with orthodox apologetics grew more acute as the tradition of freethinking and liberal biblical scholarship gained ground. The conflict was apparent in a number of areas. As one eighteenth century commentator observed, the biblical literalists played into the hands of the freethinkers.³¹ If a believer wished to maintain the literal fulfilment of prophecy, as many of the orthodox did, then he was forced to subscribe to a complex system of exegetical manipulations which not only common sense but textual and historical studies could and would challenge.³²

Difficulties were also inherent in the rationalist-supernaturalist position adopted by orthodox churchmen. Tillotson, who set the pace for Christian thinkers for many generations to come, was typical in believing that while all propositions of religion must be tested by reason, the intervention of the supernatural into a natural world was not unreasonable. Yet the question of miracle was one major point at which the historical method conflicted with theology in the nineteenth century. The spirit of reason in the work of the scholars Lessing and Herder created a methodology which was concerned with continuity, cause and effect, and the development of human

culture as a whole. Occasional supernatural activity was no longer a viable option; the influence of the divine would have to be postulated in different terms.

Fatal also was the weight that was placed upon the unity and harmony of the Bible. By this it was understood that all parts of the Bible were consistent in fact as well as spiritual truth, and were equally inspired. Taken as supportive of biblical harmony were the types and prophecies of the Old Testament, which had their counterparts in the new dispensation. Difficulties arose however when an increasingly careful study of the text revealed irreconcilable contradictions in fact, and when the higher criticism encouraged a view of prophecy as essentially reforming rather than predictive.

There were, finally, seeds of disaster resting in the convinced optimism with which religious men regarded the scientific advances of the age. This lack of tension should not be pressed too hard, for there was some concern over the results of scientific investigation. On the whole however Christians were led to believe that science presented no serious challenge to religion. The geological and biological discoveries of the next century not only were to challenge the orthodox defenses, but were to demand an entirely new set of theological concepts. Encumbered with these weaknesses in their argument, the orthodox remained committed to a Christianity supported by the twin pillars of Newtonian science and biblical literalism.³³

Scores of books were written attempting to reconcile every new scientific advance with faith; contradictions were harmonized and prophecies were declared fulfilled on the basis of some revealing numerical code. In terms of the Bible, the real significance of the debate lies ultimately in the way in which external supports were heavily depended upon in popular publications to preserve the Bible as the infallible revelation of God.

Rational Christianity with its regard for reason and natural religion, and with its reasonable defense of special revelation, continued to be a recognizable force in the theological and to a lesser degree popular religious publications of the nineteenth century. It was challenged however in the era of its ascendancy by evangelicalism and Methodism. Though differing on the exact relationship of the Spirit and the Word, both theological viewpoints sought to transfer the focus of religion from the head to the heart. Faith was more a matter of moral conduct and zealous feelings than a dry and formal assent to certain rational propositions. Both Charles Simeon and John Wesley made it clear that the revelation of God was to be sought only in Christ and not in the natural world. Its power nullified by sin, man's reason could speak only on the authenticity of revelation but could not judge its contents.

8 The evangelicals and Methodists however maintained views very similar to their orthodox brethren when it came to the Bible, so much so that it is fair to speak

in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries of an "orthodox" or "conventional" body of beliefs on the Scriptures which, if analyzed, would involve a number of theological persuasions. It is true of course that men such as Simeon and Wesley equated the Bible with Revelation, and took a more positive view of the mysteries of the Bible than did someone such as Butler, in his attempt to point out the same flaw in natural religion. But especially the former concept only served to emphasize what the eighteenth century orthodox had defended all along: an infallible oracle of God. The Bible in toto was to be taken as the dictated revelation of God for faith and practice. Furthermore, Wesley and Simeon, while placing limitations upon the human reason, made it clear that only reasonable proofs could be offered to confirm that the Bible was indeed the Word of God. Miracles and prophecies continued to be depended upon to convince the skeptical, along with persistent attempts to illustrate the high moral and consistent nature of the Bible. It was therefore with a skillfully defended view of the divine nature of the Scriptures that the vast majority of church men and women met the challenges of the nineteenth century.

Nineteenth Century Challenges: From Paine to Darwin

Thomas Paine and the Age of Reason

Earlier figures in the movement of freethinking which took shape in Paine's work had expressed skepticism towards

the truth of the biblical record. In his 1761 journal, Free Inquiry, Peter Annet for example had ridiculed the Holy Scriptures and received a fine and a year's hard labor for blasphemy. Paine's work however reached a far wider audience and influenced several generations in the nineteenth century. Nurtured in the rationalistic traditions of the eighteenth century, Paine has been described as standing at the fountainhead of religious and political free thought.³⁴ His chief significance however was not that he added anything new to the arguments of the Deists and of men such as Annet; it was that he wrote in a way which the ordinary man could understand.

In The Age of Reason Paine provided his readers with what was to become a standard pattern of criticism against Christian orthodoxy in the secularist tradition. Written in the atmosphere of terror and degeneration of Revolutionary France, the book launched a savage attack upon what Paine saw as the absurd doctrines of Christianity. Christianity was guilty of encouraging cruelty and of teaching men that there is something (whether it be God or Bible) more sacred than humanity. It was a religion responsible not only for a corrupt and selfish priesthood, but for the excesses of the Revolution. One of Paine's biographers has described the situation as Paine regarded it:

Exhumed suddenly, as if from some Nineveh, resuscitated into semi-conscious strength, they remembered only the methods of allied inquisitors and tyrants they were over-

throwing; and when on crumbled idols they raised forms called 'Nature' and 'Reason', old idols gained life in the new forms. These were the gods which had but too literally created, by the slow evolutionary force of human sacrifices, the new revolutionary priesthood. Their massacres could not be questioned by those who acknowledged the divine hand in the slaughter of the Canaanites.³⁵

Paine realized that the doctrinal points to which he objected were drawn, after needless hours of "fractious disputations", from the Bible; it was the Bible therefore which was the focal point of his attack. In The Age of Reason he claimed, "It has often been said, that anything may be proved from the Bible, but before anything can be admitted as proved by the Bible, the Bible itself must be proved to be true...The first thing to be understood is, whether there is sufficient authority for believing the Bible to be the Word of God, or whether there is not..."³⁶ Paine himself was satisfied that since many biblical tales involved the express command of God to commit atrocities as well as the sacrifice of any feelings of conscience and benevolence, they must be spurious: "Speaking for myself, if I had no other evidence that the Bible is fabulous, than the sacrifice I must make to believe it to be true, that alone would be sufficient to determine my choice."³⁷ Paine concluded that whenever he read the obscene stories, the voluptuous debaucheries, the cruel and torurous executions, the unrelenting vindictiveness with which more than half the Bible was filled, he found it to be more consistent to call it the word of a demon rather than the Word of God.

There was however other evidence which Paine found could supplement his moral revulsion at the Old Testament. Central to the argument was his belief that many of the books of the Bible were not genuine, that is, not written by those whose works they purported to be. With other great works of genius, such as Euclid's Elements of Geometry, there would be no problem if they were found to be by another person, or if they were found to be anonymous. It was different however with the books of the Bible: because of the incredible events recorded therein, the Bible's truth was dependent upon the sure testimony of the writers. Paine went on to examine the Pentateuch and other books of the Old Testament to show that they were indeed spurious.

There was for example a great deal of evidence against the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. The style and manner of the books, especially of Deuteronomy, did not favor the traditional idea, as Moses is spoken of in the third person. If Moses was the author, he made unusually arrogant statements about himself, such as that found in Numbers 12:3: "Moses was in fact a man of great humility, the most humble man on earth." Chronological and historical evidence could also be amassed against the traditional position: there was no place such as Dan, according to Judges, until after the death of Moses, so he could not have written this in Genesis. Also the passage, "That these are the kings that reigned in Edom before there reigned any king over the children of Israel",

implied that at least two kings reigned before this was written, excluding therefore the possibility of Mosaic authorship.³⁸ Thus one was led to conclude that there was no authority for believing in these books as the Word of God, the therefore for believing that God commanded the "calumnies of the Bible".

Much the same line was taken with the Psalms, literature which was in places very revengeful as well as beautiful. Paine observed that, contrary to traditional opinion, the 137th Psalm could not have been written earlier than four hundred years after the time of David, because it commemorated the captivity of Israel. "It is," Paine wrote, "an error or an imposition to call them the Psalms of David; they are a collection, as song books are nowadays, from different song writers who lived at different times."³⁹

4/ Pseudonimity and moral degradation were only two reasons however for rejecting the Scriptures. It was inconceivable to Paine that a revelation from God, quite contrary to the claims of the orthodox, should be so lacking in clarity and harmony. "For my own part," he protested, "my belief in the perfection of the Deity will not permit me to believe that a book so manifestly obscure, disorderly and contradictory can be His work."⁴⁰ He dismissed the Book of Isaiah thus:

Whoever will take the trouble of reading the book ascribed to Isaiah, will find it one of the most wild and disorderly compositions ever put together; it has neither beginning, middle or end; and, except a short historical part, and a few sketches

in history in two or three of the first chapters, is one continued, incoherent, bombastical rant, full of extravagant metaphor, without application and destitute of meaning.⁴¹

True to his Deistic roots, Paine concluded that all men need to know regarding the existence of God and morality could be learnt from "the universe we behold." The effect of these natural insights was severely limited when men were taught the immoral and incredulous tales of the Bible. Paine's criticisms as a whole offered little that was new. They were based on common sense and a revolt against the authority of church and tradition, themes common in the early years of the century. He did however hint at some ideas which were to be developed in later critical scholarship. The inner confirmation of inspiration popularized by Samuel Taylor Coleridge was suggested in Paine's belief that a passage confirmed by his own light was the result of divine direction, though contained in a book whose inspiration throughout he did not accept.⁴² Paine also anticipated Baur and Strauss in his concept of "Christian mythology", a concept which allowed him to be more discriminating in treating the Scripture marvels as fables or traditions rather than completely discrediting them.⁴³

Paine's notoriety may be partly attributed to the fact that he spoke out in plain English beyond the educated few to the semi-literate and even the illiterate. He found an especially attentive audience in the growing class of industrial workers. The circulation of The

Age of Reason was greatly facilitated by the growth of radical clubs in the last decades of the eighteenth century. Part the Second, "Being an Investigation of Free and Fabulous Theology", was reprinted twice in 1795; new editions appeared in 1796, 1818, 1834, 1839 and 1850. By speaking with "the twin tongues of infidelity in religion and politics" at a time of political and social upheaval, Paine excited vigorous efforts to defend the Bible as the special revelation of God. Paine's insistence that the whole of creation is the Bible of the true believer in God was anathema to the orthodox and the occasion for propagating the defenses of miracle, prophecy and harmony developed earlier in the century against the Deists.

Several freethinkers in the first half of the nineteenth century, including Southwell, Cooper, Holyoake and Bradlaugh, consciously followed the infidel tradition of Paine. The thoughts and attitudes popularized by Paine were kept in circulation by radical booksellers throughout most of the century. One 1839 pamphlet for example contained extracts from, among others, Annet, Paine and Voltaire. It is not surprising therefore that the Bible and the doctrines based upon it continued to be attacked in the literature of the freethinkers.

One main approach in demolishing the authority of the Bible was through the use of common sense in comparing the contents of various books. The largest effort along these lines was Peter Lecount's A Few Hundred Bible Con-

traditions, A Hunt after the Devil, and other Odd Matters, a work extensively advertised in the free thought periodicals. More widely known however were the works of Robert Cooper, a prominent lecturer on Owenism and Secularism in the first half of the century. Cooper's book, The Holy Scriptures Analyzed became one of the most popular aids to infidelity for a number of years. It capitalized on those attributes traditionally ascribed to God which were noticeably absent from certain Old Testament narratives. His Infidel's Textbook (1846), pointed to the immoral and obscene passages as well. According to Cooper for example the only women named in the genealogy of Christ could hardly be called virtuous: "Thamar, who seduced the father of her late husband; Rachel, a common prostitute; Ruth, who instead of marrying one of her cousins went to bed with another of them; and Bathsheba, an adulteress, who espoused David, the murderer of her first husband."⁴⁴

Cooper built up a formidable and at times entertaining argument against the Bible on the basis of "passages inconsistent" and "passages immoral", but of more lasting significance was the author's use of historical criticism to discredit the Bible. Paine had hinted at the use of fables and mythology in Scripture and suggested that the books of the Bible were the product of many hands. Cooper claimed that the so-called authors of the sacred histories were not to be trusted; and that no reliable contemporary historian confirmed what they recorded. He also claimed

that the books of the Bible were not written by the people whose names they bear nor at the time they state, and that the prophetic insight into the future was a highly dubious claim. His methodology was crude and his conclusions often unreliable, but they were beginning to sound alarmingly familiar. Such ideas were important in that they were corroborated by more careful and scientific biblical scholarship, a skill which had been developing throughout the eighteenth century. Biblical criticism was nurtured in the same atmosphere of rationalism as Deism and skepticism, and despite the attempts of a few British churchmen to prepare for and assimilate at least some of the new scholarship, it was received with the same animosity as rationalism. The orthodox were convinced that in historical criticism they faced the evil of infidelity in its deadliest form.

The Rise of Higher Criticism: Germany

For the purposes of the present discussion, the development of modern biblical scholarship can be traced back to the work of the French divine Richard Simon. A thorn in the flesh to his ecclesiastical superiors, Simon was an erudite priest steeped in the literature of the Hebrews and more than willing to espouse a cause in which he believed. In his Critical History of the Old Testament (1670-1677) Simon set out certain useful principles "for the resolving of the greatest difficulties of the Bible, particularly the repetitive yet contradictory

narratives of the Pentateuch". After establishing that certain prophets or "Publick Writers" faithfully collected information about the important events in the Hebrew Commonwealth, Simon declared that the authorship of each individual book in the Bible was not a matter of great consequence. It was enough to know that such prophets or public writers, under the direction of God's Spirit, collected and shaped the biblical material. Those such as Spinoza who decried the authority of the Pentateuch because of alterations or contradictions erred, as they did not consider "the quality of the authors of these alterations".

Conspicuous among Simon's Protestant adversaries was the writer and philosopher Jean Le Clerc. In his Sentiments of Some Theologians of Holland concerning the Critical History of the Old Testament, published anonymously in 1685, he clearly opposed Simon, yet at the same time placed himself in the role of critic by pointing to a number of incongruities in the Hebrew text. He observed that Genesis 36:31 contained words which could only have been written by one who lived after the establishment of the Hebrew Commonwealth. He noted also that in Genesis 37:14 the name of Hebron was used, while in fact, when the Canaanites were masters of the country, the town was called Kirjath-Arba. Le Clerc believed that these were "clear indications that Moses did not write the Book of Genesis, at least as we now have it".⁴⁵

In spite of these advances in the field of biblical scholarship, progress of any importance was for the most

part retarded at the end of the seventeenth century. In France ecclesiastical thought and activity were engrossed in rivalries within the Roman Catholic Church. Much energy was being expended in England in the controversy between Deism and orthodox Christianity. The steady growth of skepticism which the arguments of the Deists seemed to encourage did little to aid the cause of biblical scholarship within the bounds of the established churches. Both Protestant and Catholic churchmen were concerned to uphold the authority and inspiration of Scripture as a bulwark against the spread of rationalism and infidelity.

The stagnation of critical progress during this period has also been attributed to the very nature of early biblical scholarship itself.⁴⁶ The early critics to be sure had accomplished much: they had called attention to many incompatible and inaccurate statements in the Hebrew text, and had shown that the reputed authorship of several of the books rested on no more firm a foundation than vague tradition. Yet they had done little towards setting up a satisfactory theory to replace the traditional one. The conjectures of Simon and the others were nothing more than conjectures; the new hypotheses were insusceptible of proof and dangerously liable to misuse by the opponents of established religion. The emergence of analytical criticism from the destructive to the constructive stage, and the development of principles which were to guide the progress of modern criticism,

have been ascribed to the period in which the French physician and scholar Jean Astruc predominates.

The author of a number of highly esteemed medical works, Astruc has earned the reputation of laying the foundations of the modern higher criticism of the Pentateuch. The Conjectures dealing with the Book of Genesis was published in 1753 in spite of the author's fear that the volume would be used to diminish the authority of the Pentateuch. Astruc did not revive Simon's theory concerning the authorship of the Pentateuch, which accepted the traditional ascription to Moses. He instead approached Genesis from a new vantage point, noting the stylistic peculiarities and the distribution of the divine names Yahweh and Elohim and using these as clues to distinguish separate documents within the text. "I maintain," wrote Astruc,

that Moses had in his hands ancient records containing the history of his ancestors, from the Creation of the world; that in order to lose no part of these records, he divided them into portions in their entirety, one after another, and that from this compilation the book of Genesis has been composed.⁴⁷

It has been claimed that Astruc had precursors, but that he was ignorant of their speculations. He made an independent contribution by carrying through his observations and deductions "with a thoroughness which constitutes his work a fresh departure in Old Testament studies".⁴⁸ Though it did not go unnoticed, Astruc's work attracted little popular acclaim. It was in the work of J.D. Michaelis and especially in that of J.G. Eichhorn

that German biblical scholarship took shape more fully. Michaelis' Introduction to the New Testament, the first historico-critical work of its kind in Germany, became a textbook for German students and a model for later writers. In his Introduction to the Divine Writings of the Old Covenant Michaelis firmly upheld the Mosaic origin of the Pentateuch but admitted that Moses received his material from written memorials, historical poems, hieroglyphics and folk-lore. More in line with Astruc's theories and more influential than those of Michaelis however were the conclusions of Eichhorn.

A distinguished scholar and prolific writer, Eichhorn produced over forty volumes dealing with history, literature and science.⁴⁹ "He was," claims Gray, "the typical polyhistorian of his age; his powers as a writer enabled him to present his views in an interesting and attractive form; his works consequently speedily became popular and he came to be looked upon generally by his contemporaries as a marvel of almost omniscient erudition."⁵⁰ The great effect which his thinking had is evident in the reception his Introduction to the Old Testament (1770-1773) received. Cheyne claimed that the success of the book was "phenomenal", especially because Eichhorn used the fashionable literary style of the era.⁵¹ Five editions of the book were eventually published, and it rapidly became the textbook in many Protestant universities, thus effectively preparing the way for further scientific investigation within the scholarly circles of Germany.

In the introduction Eichhorn reached the same conclusion as Astruc regarding the interwoven narratives, although his criteria was wider and his inquiries more methodical. He claimed that the early history in the Pentateuch was made up of Jahwist and Elohist documents which were combined in the Mosaic age or shortly thereafter "only by such a man as Moses". These documents could be distinguished by repetitions in the text and also by variations in the divine appellation. He attributed the other four books of the Pentateuch to Moses and his contemporaries, thus defending the genuineness of the Old Testament books while allowing for their compilation by many hands. Of Eichhorn's book it has been said that,

The moment of its introduction was propitious. It was a time of intellectual growth and movement in many different directions; and while sociological and political questions absorbed most of the public interest, yet in the universities, scientific philology, the new humanism,... the exact study of antiquity, and the application of philosophical principles to historical records were among the stirring topics of the hour.⁵²

Eichhorn earned his reputation as the founder of Old Testament criticism not so much by virtue of the originality of his thought, but more because of the way in which the intellectual developments of the time converged in his treatment of the Bible. Careful and scientific textual study of the Bible was combined with the newly developed historical method, bringing the Bible into the general stream of history and literature and thus challenging the traditional ideas of inspiration and

revelation. As a result of his training as an orientalist, Eichhorn came to believe that the Old Testament was to be interpreted according to the habits of mind of the Semitic people. As a result of his friendship with the poet and philosopher Herder, Eichhorn came to appreciate the spirit of Hebrew poetry and the vigor of Old Testament imagery. The influence which he exerted on the progress of Old Testament criticism extended far into the nineteenth century.

Old Testament scholarship in the first half of the nineteenth century concentrated primarily upon the problems posed by the origin of the Pentateuch. A breakthrough eventually took shape in the Graf-Wellhausen hypothesis, a theory which radically transformed Pentateuchal scholarship and ultimately popular opinion on the dating and authorship of the first five books of the Bible. The implications of the work of Graf and Wellhausen and their predecessors were far reaching, so far as conventional opinion was concerned. What was once believed to be the work of Moses was identified as the work of four or more authors and editors; the historicity of the oldest material and therefore that material which appeared to lay the foundations of the Hebrew religion was challenged; considerable portions of the historical books were relegated to the realm of myth, and the focal point of vital and living religion was moved from the patriarchs and Moses to the prophets.

Early in the century, the Scottish Roman Catholic scholar Alexander Geddes proposed a solution to the problem of

the sources of the Pentateuch in what came to be known as the fragmentary hypothesis. In his 1792 translation of the Bible, Geddes had suggested that the Pentateuch in its present form was not written by Moses although the journals of the great lawgiver probably formed an important core of material. The books instead were most probably compiled from fragments of writings collected in the time of Solomon in Jerusalem.⁵³

Geddes' view was endorsed by J.S. Vater in his Commentary upon the Pentateuch (1802-1805) and elaborated upon by A.T. Hartmanns in his Historico-Critical Enquiries concerning the Formation of the Books of Moses (1831). Hartmanns contended that the books of the Pentateuch originated from a number of post-Mosaic mythical fragments around which larger collections grew. The hypothesis was abandoned however as a solution to the Pentateuchal problem, for it failed to explain both the unity of design and the orderly arrangement of the books. What developed in its stead was a theory which attempted to recognize a variety in the elements of composition as well as a unity of plan by postulating a series of supplements to an original document.

The way was prepared for the ascendancy of the supplementary theory by the work of W.M.L. De Wette, the German scholar who occupied the chair of theology at Heidelberg, Berlin and Basel during the early decades of the century. Described by Julius Wellhausen as "the epoch-making opener of the historical criticism of the Pentateuch",

De Wette received his doctor's degree from the University of Jena on the basis of a dissertation on Deuteronomy. Many critical points were argued with force in the treatise, including the one that on internal grounds, Deuteronomy must be of a later origin than the rest of the Pentateuch, the kernel of it being written in the reign of Josiah. De Wette's approach was significant in that he was the first biblical scholar to compare in any detail the information contained in particular documents with the actual circumstances recorded in history. He noted that the ritual laws in Deuteronomy were not obeyed in the time of Joshua, and therefore assigned Deuteronomy as well as the basic Elohist document to an era after Samuel. He was able to go further on the basis of internal evidence, fixing a more precise date for the Deuteronomic document or D.⁵⁴

Although it rested on an insecure basis, the supplementary hypothesis, which supposed that an original document using Elohim was combined with that using Jahweh at the time of Solomon, was supported by a considerable number of German scholars including Ewald, Bleek and Tuch as well as De Wette. The difficulties which the theory presented however became more and more obvious. For one thing, the original document would have to have been composed from a series of unrelated fragments; also, a careful reading of the text revealed that the original document or "Grundschrift" referred to or implied matters which were contained in the subsequent additions. The

hypothesis was particularly assailed by the philologist Hermann Hupfeld, who succeeded Gesenius at Halle.⁵⁵ In his publication of 1853, The Sources of Genesis, and the mode of their combination investigated anew, he "rediscovered" Karl Ilgen's second Elohist, and superceded the basic premise of the supplementary theory by showing that three independent documents existed. He also claimed that the Jahwist was not the editor of the older material but the author of an original document himself. This was however as far as the solution progressed with Hupfeld; it was to be another decade before scholars were liberated from the idea that all three documents were early in origin.

By the time Hupfeld had completed his studies, four documents composing the Hexateuch had been discovered: Deuteronomy, the work of the Jahwist and two documents using the divine name of Elohim. There was a conflict as to the dating and order of the material, but most scholars shared the common fault of failing to recognize the lateness of the great Elohist document or "Grund-schrift". In 1862 Julius Popper, in a small treatise, did argue that the legislation concerning the building of the tabernacle and the consecration of the priests did not take shape until after the Exile, and that the "Grundschrift" received its final editing by a scribe living immediately after Ezra. Due mainly to its serious defects in style however, the treatise did not receive a wide hearing. It was left to K.H. Graf to

develop such suggestions in his epoch-making work which appeared in 1866. In the work Graf contended that Popper's theory was substantially correct: the priestly laws contained in the "Grundschrift" were assigned to the post-exilic era because they appeared to be of a later origin than those of Deuteronomy.⁵⁶

Although neither as numerous nor as dramatic as those concerned with Pentateuchal criticism, the phases of scholarly work on the prophetic books of the Old Testament were as significant for the popular view of the Bible. The doctrine of prophecy which prevailed in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries laid emphasis chiefly on detailed and minute prediction. History, both as recorded in the Old Testament and as developing in the Christian era, unrolled a succession of incidents to vindicate the divinely inspired seers. Part and parcel of this view was the acceptance of the traditionally ascribed authors of the prophetic books, living as they allegedly did several centuries before the incidents foretold. In the light of historical and literary scholarship, however, these views were radically modified. Scholarship concerning the prophets focused particularly on the books of Isaiah and Daniel.

One of the earliest hints that Isaiah 40 through 66 was of a later origin than the rest of the book came with the translation of Bishop Lowth's Isaiah into German by Koppe in 1779. Once suggested, the new view gathered an increasing number of supporters. Eichhorn made a significant contribution to the debate with his rendering of the

Hebrew prophets in what he believed was their correct chronological order. The prophetic books and their constituent elements were arranged in what the German scholar saw as their true succession, beginning with Joel, which he placed between 790 and 780 B.C., and concluding with Daniel, which was assigned to the Maccabean era. The entire latter section of Isaiah was attributed to the age of Captivity and Restoration. The fragment hypothesis being ascendent at this point in the realm of Pentateuchal studies, the discourses of Isaiah 40 to 66 were distributed among a number of unknowns in Babylonia and Jerusalem.

A more solid basis of prophetic criticism was developed by the lexicographer and grammarian Gesenius, in his translation of a commentary on Isaiah in 1820. From that time, claimed J. Estlin Carpenter, a belief in the composite character of the book steadily won its way, first in Germany and then, a half century later, in Britain.⁵⁷ Ewald's work on the prophets of the Old Testament (1840) arranged the prophetic books along lines similar to those laid down by Eichhorn. Ewald's sense of historical criticism however was wider and more penetrating. Behind his chronological distribution of the prophetic material was the firm conviction that the prophets spoke primarily to the time in which they lived. Thus most of Isaiah 1 through 39 was assigned to Israel during the reign of Ahaz, with the exception of 12:1-6, 13:2-14:23, 21:1-10, 23:15-18 and chapters 34-35, which were placed with chap-

ters 40-66 as coming from the Exile. He also assigned chapters 24-27 to the period after the return from captivity. Ewald's criteria of historical circumstances, novel themes, distinctive words and phrases, and peculiarities in style remained standard arguments in the critical position for the rest of the century.

The principle that a prophet was primarily concerned with the contemporary situation in which he found himself also had a disconcerting effect on the conventional view of Daniel. Hobbes and Spinoza in the seventeenth century had both expressed doubts about the traditional authorship of the book, and as early as 1783 in Germany, the book was assigned to the age of Antiochus. This view was given the weighty support of scholars such as Gesenius, Eichhorn, De Wette and Bleek. As in the case of Isaiah 40 to 66, they turned to the historical allusions and internal evidence of style and vocabulary to support their theory.

Critical scrutiny in the nineteenth century was not confined to Daniel and Isaiah, but included the whole range of prophetic literature. Traces of widespread editorial manipulation were noted in various forms; the insertion of longer or shorter passages, the expansion of older oracles and the addition of new ones, and the aggregation of prophecies of widely different dates into single collections. In most cases, the evidence for another author or authors as well as of an editor remained substantially the same, and included historical references, variations in style, theme and words. What varied from

theory to theory was the amount and force of the evidence.

The difficulties which German higher criticism raised for the conventional believer were fundamental and far-reaching, and their discovery did not demand a high degree of scholarly perception. As the preparatory work of the English Broad Churchmen towards the acceptance of a broader view of the Bible had received little notice, there was no question of compromise with, let alone acceptance of, German "neology". It was a black and white situation: either the Bible was the Word of God, given by inspiration and inerrant in matters of fact, or it was not. If it was the Word of God, there could be no false claims as in books written by unknown hands and yet purporting to be the work of Moses. There could be no fictitious tales which gave the appearance of history, as the patriarchal stories did, and yet which were fabrications of another era. The myth as a vehicle of spiritual truth was neither understood nor welcomed.

The German critical movement not only threatened the conventional idea of Old Testament integrity, but the entire Christian scheme of salvation. The idea that much of the historical material was written long after the events it described gave rationalists the necessary confirmation of their skepticism which had developed on the grounds of reason. How could one trust reminiscences of miraculous events occurring a half century or more earlier, especially if they had been orally transmitted by fallible human beings? That they occurred at all, let alone via divine intervention, was open to question. And

if one could question the miracles in Hebrew history, what was to happen to the Virgin Birth and Resurrection?

The new critical inquiries had also challenged the identity of many of the biblical writers to whom books such as Isaiah and Genesis had been ascribed. The divine mission of such writers as Moses and Isaiah had been attested to by miraculous events in their lives, ultimately guaranteeing the inspired and authoritative nature of their words. The critics however wished to ascribe the sacred books to writers about whom so little was known that they had to be called "J" and "E" and "Second Isaiah". Furthermore, how could men conceive of the book of God as containing such deceitful statements as that in Deuteronomy, claiming that here readers found the words of Moses?

Particularly important - and distressing - were the conclusions to which the Continental critics were coming regarding the prophetic books. The fulfilment of Old Testament prophecies in the Christian dispensation had long stood as a formidable sign of the inspiration and authority of the Scriptures. The reference of Isaiah to the birth of a son in chapter 7 lost its significance for many believers when referred to the immediate reign of Ahaz.

The results of German scholarship also challenged the Christian faith by challenging the conventional belief in the types and antitypes by which the Scriptures were related and confirmed. The idea that Old Testament events and personages prefigured the realities of the

of the Christian dispensation in a divinely ordered system was an important part of popular teaching, especially when it came to understanding the sacrificial nature of Christ's death. The grounds on which this doctrine was developed were eroded, as the sacrificial system of the ancient Israelites was seen as stemming from the ritualistic phase of a long evolutionary process rather than as a result of supernatural dictation.

Formidable also to the conventional believer was the new critical definition of biblical "truth". Legend and especially myth were substituted for what were commonly believed to be literal occurrences as verifiable as the Battle of Hastings or the reign of George III. Concepts such as "spiritual truth" or the "truth of edification" were commonly used by the critics to retain the value of legendary and mythical material; they were concepts however which proved difficult to define as well as understand. Furthermore, the admission of mythical and legendary elements in the Scriptures left the way open for the denial of miracles, and the eventual questioning of such events as the Virgin Birth and the Resurrection.

The new criticism, finally, demanded a complete readjustment in the traditional views of inspiration and revelation. It is true of course that long before the flourishing of the Graf-Wellhausen hypothesis, churchmen in Britain had become aware of the need for a broader and more flexible notion of inspiration. The need became acute with the advance of German scholarship. The human limitations and errors so evident in the Old Testament

record and the natural evolutionary development of Israel's worship and theology challenged the idea of writers submissive in the hands of God. Also, Israel had commonly been regarded as the chosen depository for God's special revelation, yet the close relationship which Israel apparently had with the peoples and literature of the ancient world cast doubt upon her unique role. How, for example, could one reconcile special and exclusive revelation with the fact that many of Israel's worship practices were shared by and originated with more ancient nations?

A word must be said at this point about the Tübingen School, and particularly the work of D.F. Strauss, although he was concerned primarily with the criticism of the New Testament. The British public became aware of the drift of German scholarship through British interpreters early in the nineteenth century, but the original sources remained closed books and the identity of the German critics, for the most part, a mystery. It was otherwise however with the work of D.F. Strauss. V.F. Storr writes that in Germany, the extravagances of Strauss's Life of Jesus made biblical criticism a subject of common talk, helping to bring it down from its academic heights and into the homes of men.⁵⁸ The unrest and turmoil which it created in Britain was intense.

In The Life of Jesus Strauss took it upon himself to investigate rather than assume the historicity of the Gospel narratives. He rejected both the orthodox approach, which took the supernatural events for granted, as well as the approach of the rationalists who did no more than

offer naturalistic explanations of the same alleged phenomena. Governed by presuppositions which ruled out any miraculous events in the Gospels, Strauss proceeded to speak of mythical elements which testified not to the truth of facts but to edifying and spiritual truth. Despite the fact that he attempted to be constructive, even apologetic, in The Life of Jesus, the immediate impact of the book was negative.⁵⁹ It appeared to believers that Strauss was once again propagating the Deistic heresies of the eighteenth century. The turmoil created by the book identified the higher criticism with rationalism in the popular mind, and encouraged the faithful to wield traditional weapons to defend the Bible as the divine revelation of God.

It is likely that many ordinary believers were aware of Strauss's work because of the widespread and hostile reception which it received. Published in 1835, the book produced a sensation rarely made by a philosophical or theological work. As the nineteenth-century biographer of Strauss pointed out, it was not the first time that someone had spoken of mythical elements in the Bible.⁶⁰ Previous attempts had however been considerably more timid and had been limited to a few dogmatically unimportant narratives. In The Life of Jesus, "it was applied to the whole of the Gospel tradition to such an extent, and with such rigorous logical consistency, that it threatened utterly to explain away the historical substance, or to shrivel it to the smallest compass."⁶¹ No longer could the Bible be trusted, and worse, the Jesus

of the Bible was no longer the Son of God as he had been traditionally understood to be. The storm clouds gathered over the man who dared to set himself in opposition to the long-held doctrines of the faith; "then they burst with a mighty torrent of criticism, the like of which had not been heard or seen in the theological world since the time of the Reformation".⁶²

Strauss's notoriety stretched far beyond the bounds of the theological world. It did not take a learned theologian to read the words of the Apostle, "Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ. This is the antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son", and conclude that the antichrist had finally appeared on the earth in the person of Strauss. Firing the popular imagination further were discoveries such as that of the learned pietist who saw that numerical equivalents of the Hebrew letters forming Strauss's name added up to 666, the mark of the beast in Revelation. Though only a limited number of Englishmen could read the actual works of Strauss, such voluminous infidelity could not but confirm suspicions that the world might indeed end in 1836. Strauss became a bogey, a talisman for a society beset with political and social trauma. Adding to his notoriety was the cancellation of his election to a chair of divinity in Zurich, an episode which ended in the destruction of the government of the canton. As Chadwick claims, "Professors of divinity who help a government to fall are not so common as to be overlooked by newspapers."⁶³

Fear of prosecution caused many publishers to reject translations of the work in the decade after 1835. Due to the legal judgment however that blasphemy was not blasphemy unless it scoffed, a full English translation appeared in 1846. The book did more to unsettle the orthodox rather than disseminate any positive ideas concerning the critical study of the Bible. As scientific study of the New Testament documents was still in its infancy in 1835, Strauss lacked the necessary tools to satisfactorily sift the historical material. History was not taken seriously, causing Strauss to exaggerate the mythical element in the Gospels. It was an alarming introduction to biblical scholarship for many who could not understand myth and who feared the destructive tendencies of the rationalists.

The Rise of Higher Criticism: Britain

Biblical scholarship in Britain in the first half of the nineteenth century lagged far behind the research being conducted on the Continent. Conservative divines feared German thought and invented the word "neology" to describe the lax doctrines of inspiration held within German intellectual circles. Conybeare's Bampton Lecture of 1824 warned against the "infection" of German divinity. A knowledge of the German language in the first decades of the century subjected one to great suspicion. The best critical works in foreign languages remained untranslated and the interpretation of the Bible persisted

in a very unsatisfactory state.⁶⁴ Yet there were some publications during this period which did little to directly acquaint the general public with the methods and conclusions of serious critical study, but which did a great deal to alarm orthodox believers. Churchmen in Britain were becoming increasingly aware that the Bible was under attack by forces more sinister than the infidelity of Deism and the freethinking of Thomas Paine.

Regarded as one of the most notable critics of the time was Alexander Geddes, a Roman Catholic priest from Aberdeen. Along with a translation of the Bible completed earlier, Geddes published the Critical Remarks on the Hebrew Scriptures in 1800. In the work he claimed that the Pentateuch was not the work of Moses, but rather was composed of a number of sections or "fragments" from the time of the Hebrew legislator and later. He also took a broad view of inspiration, and claimed that he treated the Old Testament "as I would any other writings of antiquity". His work however made little impression in England either on the theology of the day or on the mass of believers. The English mind was not ripe for the full reception of these new opinions. A long period was still to elapse before any real stirring of the stagnant waters took place.⁶⁵

A more widespread ripple in the orthodox waters was created by Herbert Marsh's Origin and Composition of the First Three Canonical Gospels in 1801. In it Marsh translated part of Michaelis' Introduction to the New

Testament and in addition recognized and offered his own solution to the problem posed by the Synoptic Gospels. He claimed that a view of the Bible as free from error of every kind was no longer tenable, and he advocated the free application of critical principles to the entire Scriptures. German criticism was again introduced in Britain, and again it failed to take root. The challenge which it presented however was more alarming than that posed by the work of Geddes:

The publication of this 'dissertation' produced one of those panics to which the orthodox world was as subject as volcanic regions to earthquakes. There was a book written by a Professor of Divinity, in the University of Cambridge, published at the expense of the University, the tendencies of which was indirectly to modify if not to overturn the received doctrine of infallible inspiration.⁶⁶

There were a number of other scholarly publications in Britain in the next few decades which went further in accepting and disseminating broader and more critical views of the Bible. Contact with German scholarship, particularly that of Niebuhr and Schleiermacher, prompted several works advocating more relaxed views of inspiration and more progressive views of revelation. Also transformed was the conventional view of prophecy as essentially predictive and accurate in detail. Finally, the canons of the newly developed practice of historical criticism were being brought to bear on the favored narratives of the Old Testament, particularly those of the Book of Genesis.

John Brown, in his Bampton Lecture of 1806, took the bold step of using for his topic the progressive nature

of divine revelation. Revelation was viewed as the gradual unfolding of the divine purpose, rather than as a once-and-for-all communication. It was in this way that Brown dealt with the moral difficulties presented by the Old Testament. God was seen as gradually educating the Hebrews: Adam received only a limited knowledge of God suitable to his condition, making him intellectually and morally inferior to his descendants.

Inspiration likewise was increasingly being seen as something real and living rather than mechanical and impersonal. Connop Thirlwall, in his "Introduction" to Schleiermacher's Essay on St. Luke, rejected a mechanical view of the way in which the biblical writers were guided as well as defended an inquiry into the Synoptic problem. It was Samuel Taylor Coleridge's work however which dealt most comprehensively - and most effectively - with a new understanding of the doctrines of inspiration and revelation. Coleridge has been acclaimed as one who took up the task of making England aware of the current German movement of biblical criticism. He endeavored to deal with the underlying implications of the critical movement for theological students and clergymen, and it is in this that his lasting significance was rooted. He was convinced that the faith of the Christian did not depend on the authenticity of this or that part of the Bible, and therefore did not have to rest upon an infallible book.

The Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit (1840), in the shape of seven letters to a "friend", gathered together

Coleridge's opinions on the Bible, inspiration and the new criticism which were scattered throughout his other writings. The author boldly announced in the letters that the Bible was to be read and studied as any other piece of literature; this meant therefore the recognition of discrepancies, exaggerations and sections which offended the conscience. To those believers who held to verbal inspiration, such difficulties were unthinkable. To Coleridge however they indicated the need for a new look into the grounds upon which the belief in the inspired nature of the Bible rested. Thus, external demonstrations of the infallibility of the sacred books in all matters, or of the fulfilment of prophecy, were useless. In the Scriptures, Coleridge claimed,

I have found words for my inmost thoughts, songs for my joy, utterances for my hidden griefs, and pleadings for my shame and my feebleness...In short, whatever finds me, bears witness for itself that it has proceeded from a Holy Spirit...⁶⁷

Coleridge also made an important distinction between revelation and inspiration, attacking as he did in the Confessions "the confounding of the two distinct conceptions, revelation by the Eternal Word and actuation of the Holy Spirit".⁶⁸ He agreed that to an extent everything in the Scriptures could be attributed to the inbreathing assistance of the Holy Spirit but not to the revelation of the informing Word. He understood revelation as being that which was dictated by God's infallible intelligence, while inspiration referred to that which was dictated plus that which was known by ordinary means. Men had commonly - and



wrongly - believed that everything inspired was also revealed. In his Notes on Luther's Table Talk Coleridge claimed that Luther had mistakenly identified the living Word of God with the written word.⁶⁹ Coleridge defended Luther's opponent Bullinger, who contended that the written word was the Word of God only so far as it was the vehicle of the living Word, thus enforcing the distinction between the belief that the Bible is the Word of God and the Bible contains the Word of God.

This distinction between the revealed and the inspired led Coleridge to emphasize finally the underlying or edifying truths of the Scriptures, rather than the facts. It was an emphasis which was to feature large in the attempts to popularize the higher criticism later in the century. Revealed truth, which was inerrant, could be discerned by examining the intention of the biblical writers. Readers were directed to return once again to the "ideas" or underlying principles of certain biblical texts. They had to continually ask why an author had included a particular passage or narrative and what the truth was which he was trying to set forth. Readers would come to see for example that the claim "Jesus is the Son of God" was revealed, but not the statement that "there were 800,000 men in the army of Jeroboam".

The Confessions found a sufficiently strong welcome within a small circle of educated clergymen and laymen to warrant three editions within fifteen years. These editions nevertheless encountered largely negative criticism in the popular and semi-popular press. Coleridge and his

views on the Bible were seen as one more example of "infidelity" under the sway of the new German philosophy. Both the Christian Observer and the English Review attacked the elevation of man to the role of sole arbiter of truth: those portions of the Bible which a man received as divine became dependent solely upon their congruence with the reader's preconceived notions of the character and actions of God.⁷⁰ J.H. Rigg in 1859 denounced Coleridge as a rationalist, for he claimed that, "no man need acknowledge any external standard of truth whatever; each man's Reason becomes to him the measure and standard of all truth".⁷¹ Finally, the work was denounced because the author's intimacy with the German writers had destroyed his faith in the Scriptures as the Word of God.⁷² The alarm was sounded, as Coleridge had acted as an interpreter of "infidelity" to English minds, particularly the minds of a growing class of churchmen who later came to be known as "Broad Churchmen".

A word must be said at this point about the significant role played by Frederick Denison Maurice and Thomas Arnold in the transformation of attitudes towards biblical inspiration and revelation. Looking to Coleridge and Julius Hare for guidance, Maurice eventually set out his views on biblical authority, inspiration and revelation in two volumes attacking Mansel's Bampton Lectures of 1859. Those such as Mansel who spoke of verbal inspiration wrongly separated the Bible as inspired from all else, thought to be "uninspired". But the "breath of God", according to Maurice, could be found in many common books,

in nature, and in the words of comfort spoken in the midst of human conflict and agony. The divine revelation had its "locale" in the inner spirit of man; the Bible was only a witness to this revelation and was not to be equated with revelation itself. Yet there was still something to be said for the special nature of the Bible. It presented to men not a list of doctrinal and dogmatic decrees but a whole spectrum of living examples of the "unveiling" of God in the souls of his creatures.

Although Thomas Arnold can scarcely be called a "disciple" of Coleridge, and although he treated many of Coleridge's ideas with discrimination, he had certainly read many of his works and offered them high praise. In Arnold's Essay on the Right Interpretation and Understanding of the Scriptures (1832), he applied what he had learned from Coleridge as well as from the German biblical scholars. He expressed dissatisfaction at the churchmen who questioned a man's faith if he showed the slightest sympathy towards criticism. Men had to learn to look upon the higher criticism as a means of increasing the value of the Bible rather than as a study detrimental to faith.

In his Essay Arnold set out three basic points on the right use of the Bible which are paralleled in the works of Coleridge. First he asserted that readers had to distinguish the original, local meaning of a passage from the underlying principles applicable to any age. Secondly they had to realize that the immoral nature of some of the Old Testament narratives had to be admitted and attributed to the progressive nature of God's revelation.

Finally, Arnold along with Coleridge affirmed that it was not the truth of revelation which was invalidated by the recent barrage of scientific and historical objections, but rather the conventional and mechanical definition of inspiration. In the long run, the divine origins of the Bible could not be proven by miracles or any other external evidence; what was required came only from within a man who had witnessed in life "the scheme of its whole completeness".⁷³

The inroads of German scholarship however affected not only men's understanding of the inspiration and authority of the Bible, but also their view of the nature of Hebrew prophecy. John Davison, in the Warburton Lectures of 1819-1820, sought to bring about a more intelligent attitude towards this aspect of Old Testament studies. Lashing out against current elaborate schemes on the fulfilment of prophecy, Davison asserted that the prophet was a moral and religious teacher as well as seer. Thomas Arnold made an even greater effort to popularize this view of prophecy in a series of sermons given in 1839. He advocated, in the notes accompanying the sermons, that the prophet should be looked upon as a preacher of righteousness to his own generation. He also stressed that the prophecies spoken did have reference to the future, and to his nineteenth century audiences, but in terms only of spiritual truth and not in terms of detailed historical fulfilments:

The Prophets never cast themselves as it were into the midst of the ocean of futurity; their view reaches over the ocean, their hearts it may be are set on the shores beyond it, but their feet are on their own land; there is the first occasion of their hopes, and there lies their duties...⁷⁴

The work of Coleridge, Arnold and Maurice, while largely confined to development in academic circles, had a powerful influence on the growth of what was to later emerge as the liberal tradition within the Church of England. The impact upon the general public however was both immediate and sharp with the publication of Henry Hart Milman's History of the Jews (1829), a pioneer work which was intended to be popular.

Henry Hart Milman, identified in outlook as one of the Oxford Noetics, has been described as one whose scholarship was among the best the Church of England produced in his generation.⁷⁵ He created what A.P. Stanley termed the first decisive inroad of German theology into England. In The History of the Jews he adopted a critical attitude towards the historical narratives of the Bible, explaining several of them as oriental poetry and allegory, and criticizing others on the less sophisticated grounds of natural improbability. The Hebrews were regarded as one among many ancient peoples and thus had to be studied by the same methods of research as the others. Milman claimed for example that the arrest of the sun and moon in Joshua was no miracle but a simple poetical representation. The fiery destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah was explained by the fact that these cities rested on flammable veins of bitumen and sulphur and were probably

8 struck by lightning. In the framework of historical criticism Milman likened Abraham to an oriental emir or shiekh. It was this last comparison particularly which caused outrage among the orthodox.

Such a storm was raised by the treatment of Jewish history as ordinary history that the publisher was forced to discontinue the Family Library Series in which Milman's book was contained. Milman, as Dean of St. Paul's, was bitterly attacked as a 'German' and a rationalist. The Christian Guardian and Church of England Magazine concluded a review of the book with the question: "What Christian would but this book for his children? Who could have conceived it possible that a clergyman could be found to write it? And what father in this country would not join to reprobate it?"⁷⁶ The British Critic claimed:

We have terminated our reading, indignant and sorrowful, thoroughly convinced that the author is destitute of some of the most indispensable qualifications for his undertaking, and that his production is characterised, in an abundance of instances, by a want of reverence, a want of fairness, a want of faithfulness, and a want of consistency. These are heavy charges, more especially when urged against an historian who professes that he is both a believer and a steward of the mysteries of God, both a member and a minister of the Church of England, both a graduate and a Bampton lecturer in the University of Oxford.⁷⁷

What is most significant about the work of these British churchmen, in terms of the popularization of higher criticism, is the hostile and indifferent reception with which they were met. Coleridge, Arnold, Maurice, Milman - all were concerned that men meet the new scholarship with tolerance - and within the context of faith. The Bible

continued to be acknowledged as inspired, albeit in a different manner, and works such as Milman's sought only to depict the figures of the Old Testament as flesh and blood characters in authentic life-situations. Yet what was meant to be a period of assimilation and preparation - at least on the part of clergymen and educated laymen - did little to reconcile the general public to the new critical study of the Bible.

British scholarship in the period failed to prevent believers from identifying anyone sympathetic towards criticism as a skeptic and a rationalist. The publicity which such work received in the popular press emphasized the identification. Also, in an attempt to defend the Scriptures, believers were barraged with material, discussed below, which clung tenaciously to the old apologetic of miracles and prophecy.

Eighteenth century rationalism, working class infidelity, and the startling claims of biblical scholars colored the mood of the faithful in the middle years of the nineteenth century. Confidence there was in the face of these challenges - confidence in the fact that God had disclosed himself to man and had provided proofs of this disclosure that no reasonable man could question. There were undercurrents of doubt however, and if not doubt, at least uneasiness. The moral atrocities of the Old Testament preyed upon the minds of more than a few believers who, due to the boom in the Bible industry, were becoming uncomfortably familiar with the God of Abraham

Isaac and Jacob. What was significant about the added challenge of morality was that it was not provoked primarily by the invidious writings of German neologists nor the ranting of working class infidels, but by private judgment. Many educated and devout churchmen were reading the Bible carefully, and finding that their moral sense was offended. Rowland Williams, like many other young men around 1850, was troubled because he could not make some passages of the Old Testament square with his own idea of right and wrong. Believing in the soundness of his own moral code, he could not imagine that the code of God would not rise far above the most exalted conceptions of man. Those of an evangelical persuasion were not exempt from such tensions, and indeed felt them more acutely. The moral revolution, and the emphasis on right conduct rather than doctrinal assent, could not help but contradict the injustice, treachery, and favoritism of the Old Testament.

The turmoil of believers increased with the development of geological studies and the collapse of the physico-theory of the eighteenth century in the face of Darwin's theory of evolution. This was the third great challenge to biblical authority. Insecurity bred retrenchment behind the lines of defense, and the possibility of a fair hearing for biblical scholarship was postponed for decades. The shock created by the new knowledge in science combined with fear generated over the radical roots of biblical scholarship to produce a resounding and emotional denunciation of the critical enterprise when it came to

the attention of the British public in the 1860's.

Science and the Rise of Darwinism

The popularization of geology and the development of the theory of evolution were changes which weakened the defenses of the orthodox. The debate focusing on Genesis and geology did not crush faith; rather it intensified the conviction that God's Word was literally true and at the same time heightened popular uneasiness that science ^{might?} may prove ultimately to be not an ally but a deadly foe of faith. In the ensuing controversy over Darwin and evolution, churchmen became aware of the full strength of the opposition. Neither defection to atheism nor a reconciliation with the Broad Churchmen was the outcome, but rather a state of turmoil and uncertainty.

After an era of remarkable advancement and then relative stagnation, scientific research in Britain entered into a period of "qualitative improvement and quantitative expansion" around 1760.⁷⁸ Scientific societies and private institutes grew up in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, enlarging that portion of the educated public interested in scientific questions. Science enjoyed a growing prestige as a body of truths about the physical universe, derived from observation and calculation, which could be agreed upon by all reasonable men. That these truths might in any important way conflict with religion was scarcely considered.⁷⁹

It was believed in fact that the opposite was true. Ever since the time of Bacon, scientists had been congratulating themselves upon revealing a divinely ordered system of nature. The biographer of the "devout naturalist" Robert Boyle wrote that, "In his devotion to the laboratory and his loyalty to the altar, Boyle was the child of his age".⁸⁰ Newton's laws seemed to reveal not only an omnipotent Creator who had shaped an orderly universe, but an omnipresent God who sustained it. All through the theological controversies of the eighteenth century, religion and science were seen to be harmonious and in mutual support. The same spirit continued through the early nineteenth century, as the popularity of William Paley's work indicates. Changes however in the object and implications of scientific research were already taking place by 1805 when Paley's Natural Theology was going through its tenth edition.

It has been claimed that, like most of his contemporaries, Paley based his arguments on the constitution of things, as they are rather than upon their development.⁸¹ So long as natural philosophy, concentrating as it did on physics, astronomy and mathematics, was devoted to the construction of nature, it emphasized the design of the universe. Geology, still in its infancy in Paley's time (the earliest comprehensive treatise was James Hutton's Theory of the Earth published in 1795), was the first science to be concerned with the history of nature rather than with its order.⁸² The implications of this change

were significant so far as religious beliefs were concerned.

A situation of conflict for science and religion was first posed by geology. The geological concern for developmental processes in the formation of the earth for example questioned the veracity of the biblical record and, perhaps most significant of all, the truth of the belief that the animal world as we know it is exactly as it was created. With the development of a conception of the natural order as autonomous, continuous and uniform, the acts of God, whether in originally creating or providentially governing, became harder to discern. Thus the appeal to natural phenomena in evidence of the divine existence and attributes began to lose its former cogency.⁸³

The advance of scientific research and particularly geological studies was consciously popularized in the nineteenth century; it was certain therefore that at least those churchmen who were educated ^{would be?} were conscious of the new scientific spirit of the age. It was also likely ^{would become?} that they were becoming increasingly apprehensive about the threats which appeared to be posed for biblical authority and inspiration. Those who determined to popularize science shared the desire to inculcate religious orthodoxy and patriotism. There were few scientists who would not have asserted publicly that scientific research enlarged man's comprehension of God's plans for the world, a sentiment largely supporting traditional orthodoxy. Roderick Murcheson, a popular lecturer as well as geologist, claimed that:

Geology...in expounding the former condition of the globe, convinces us that every variation of its surface has been but a step towards the accomplishment of one great end; whilst all such revolutions are commemorated by monuments, which revealing the course and object of each change, that the earth can alone have been fashioned into a fit abode for Man by the ordinances of INFINITE WISDOM.⁸⁴

Compel us to conclude

Science also appeared to be useful in raising the moral and intellectual levels of the masses, and so contributing to the stability of society. Even radical reformers were convinced that the liberation of the poor would come only by the diffusion of useful scientific knowledge. The supporters of the Mechanics' Institute in London "anticipated an immediate strengthening of the British nation so soon as labourers turned their surplus energies to cultivating the intellectual benefits derived from science instead of the dissipations derived from pub, pothouse and trades combinations".⁸⁵

Popular enthusiasm for geology was particularly evident. When Henry Adams came to England, he found "gentlemanly geology" to be one of the standard features of the country-house weekend.⁸⁶ Indeed, "an informed contemplation of the landscape was eminently the sort of thing which a gentleman of taste was expected to enjoy".⁸⁷ The Victorian novel frequently represented worthy characters "as occupying their leisure hours in the accumulation and contemplation of a cabinet of fossils".⁸⁸ The popularizing efforts of the scientists fell on fertile soil. The study of geology emphasized adventure and romance, was suitable to an era before the advent of long-distance travel, and involved material which could be comprehended

readily by someone who was not an expert. One of the first of the British Association reports explained the popularity of geology by saying that since it dealt with "a lower order of facts", it could be easily understood.⁸⁹ It was even thought a suitable accomplishment for ladies, since it could be conducted as close to home as the neighboring countryside or nearby railway tracks.

Such amateur observers were further encouraged by the work of the British Association. Founded in 1831 with a great deal of help from geologists, the association opened their annual scientific congress to the general public, and by staging it in the provinces instead of London, helped to "encourage the pursuit of natural philosophy as a hobby".⁹⁰ The members of the Association were in constant demand to speak at Mechanics' Institutes, town halls and natural history societies; with the blessings of patriotism and Providence as their goal, they readily agreed.

As a tool to uphold the orthodox view of Christianity and particularly the Bible however geology proved distressingly weak. The study of the formation of the earth raised more problems than it solved. The difficulty in these years was to reconcile the statements in Genesis, which were traditionally regarded as inerrant, with the time scale required by geologists. Instead of speaking in terms of days, as in the Bible, the geologists spoke of creation in terms of millions of years as a result of their observations of the strata of rock and the fossils.

There was also the problem of the Deluge in Genesis. That the world was once inundated with water was a possibility; that it occurred less than five thousand years ago was not. Noah's flood was reduced, at best, to a local flood, sufficient only to have drowned all mankind who may have lived in the Euphrates Valley.

Of greatest significance however both in terms of geology and theology in these decades was the work of Sir Charles Lyell. His Principles of Geology placed the science on a systematic basis, brought the whole realm of nature under the conception of developmental law, and "practically gave the death-blow to the catastrophic school of geologists".⁹¹ The sale of the book, from the outset, was remarkable, and it underwent constant revision from the author, its twelfth edition being issued in 1875.

There were a number of divines who were convinced that the eighteenth century alliance between science and religion must stand and so worked out what they believed were reasonable compromises. There is little doubt that these divines held to the inspiration and accuracy of the Old Testament, but they were prepared to surrender the more vulnerable points of the biblical story. Buckland developed the classic concession in his admission that the world is thousands of years old and that the "days" of Genesis really refer to epochs of thousands of years. The leading Congregational churchman, Dr. Pye Smith, in a series of lectures in 1839 abandoned among other things the recent creation of the world, the derivation of all

animals and vegetables from one center, and a universal deluge.⁹²

Such attempts to arrive at a reasonable conclusion were met with popular as well as learned denunciation. Buckland particularly was attacked by the press and a host of pamphleteers. Biblical literalism and inerrancy dominated most popular beliefs and many academic circles as well. There was, to be sure, a great interest in the work of geology, but it never occurred to most churchmen that there could be a conflict between science and the Bible which would require concessions from the defenders of the Scriptures. When a discrepancy occurred, it was taken as a matter of course that the Bible could not be mistaken. It was the claims of geology instead which were either rejected or reinterpreted. As the Plymouth Brethren Philip Gosse believed, God had created the rocks with fossils already in them in order to test men's beliefs.⁹³

The fierce adherence to biblical accuracy did little to place faith on firmer ground in the face of relentless scientific advance. The moderate utterances of Buckland and Smith, based as they were on eighteenth century optimism with regards to science and religion, proved increasingly futile. When the century's most powerful challenge to faith was to come in the form of Darwin's Origin of Species, there would be turmoil and distress before any reasonable reconciliation and reconstruction.

A book of anonymous authorship and great popular interest appeared between Lyell's Principles and the Origin

of Species. Robert Chambers, a Scottish journalist, was eventually revealed as the author of the Vestiges of Creation. Published in 1844, the book went through four editions in six months. Although often inaccurate and lacking in adequate evidence, the Vestiges "deserves credit for having stated a principle of great scientific importance in an arresting and interesting way".⁹⁴

Chambers asserted that once it was admitted that the universe was subject to natural laws, it followed that the introduction of a new species into the world must have come about through natural law as well. Contrary to the traditional notion of the fixity of species, which the Bible appeared to teach, Chambers' theory was more in line with the uniformitarianism of geologists; it also marked the beginning of what was to be a new and acute phase in the conflict between science and religion.

In 1859 Darwin's Origin of Species was published. "The power of the book lay not only in the intrinsic significance of its presiding idea, which...had already been anticipated, but in the mass of recorded data by which the thesis was sustained."⁹⁵ The negations of the traditionalists shrunk to insignificance next to twenty years of careful and critical observation. The threat to faith posed by Darwin's work appeared in the fact that special creation by some external, purposive being was no longer a necessary postulate. The natural world evolved through a process of struggle and survival, requiring no impulse or control from without. Darwin's

theory particularly upset believers who held to the accuracy of the historical information provided in the Bible.

What is of particular interest for purposes of the present discussion is the impact, so far as it can be traced, which the Origin of Species had on the general public who came into contact with the newspapers and periodicals of the day. There must have been a large number of churchmen who remained indifferent to Darwin and who were content to hold traditional views which, if reasonable proofs failed, could always be bolstered by moral considerations. There were others however who shared in a generally unsettled climate of religious opinion. Darwin's ideas represented only one aspect in a growing conflict between reason and religion. The synthesis upon which the traditional apologetic was based was disintegrating. Science claimed that the history of the world stretched far beyond six thousand years and that no universal flood occurred during the history of mankind. The Church claimed the opposite, and men were beginning to fear that the Church taught something which could no longer be believed. Science however represented only a part of this religious disquiet. Moral feelings contributed considerably to personal if not public doubt. Also of great significance was the advance being made in the historical studies of ancient texts, particularly the books of the Old Testament.

One year after Darwin's book was published, the British public became aware of just how far critical study had ad-

vanced in Essays and Reviews. Although this discussion is primarily concerned with the development of higher criticism, the fundamental role of scientific research must be stressed. Science as it was developed and popularized created a general climate in which the critical study of the Bible both flourished and was emphatically denounced:

Science contributed to the unsettlement of the educated English mind by its general issues; by pushing men towards more skepticism over evidence for the miraculous; by giving the ordinary man the uncomfortable feeling that somehow...science favoured a materialistic philosophy of life;...by giving the historians their chance to treat the documents of the Bible as historical texts; and by first proving that parts of the Bible were myth.⁹⁶

Popular Attitudes towards the Bible

The antagonist in this saga of biblical criticism is variously referred to as "the conventional believer", "the orthodox Christian", and "the traditionalist". One of the major problems in studying the popular introduction to biblical criticism is determining what beliefs such a person held about the Bible before the advent of critical thinking. It is probable that many Victorians who clung tenaciously to verbal inspiration had few if any literary skills. Those who were better educated left behind some indication of their beliefs only if they merited a biography. Most of the information presented in this section therefore has been drawn from what the masses were taught from pulpit and popular

press along with a few observations from contemporary sources such as periodicals on how the age regarded and read the Bible. There are indications that at times the principles of interpretation operating on a popular level deviated somewhat from the more intricate scholarly exercises, such as is seen in the use of allegory. Generally speaking however it was the same inspired and harmonious Bible which laymen and clergy alike defended from the ravages of infidelity.

The nineteenth century had produced three major challenges to biblical supremacy which, unlike the Deism of an earlier era, came to the notice of and alarmed the ranks of traditionalist laymen. The tradition of freethinking initiated largely by Thomas Paine launched a widespread and vehement attack against the Scriptures which were seen as supporting a repressive ecclesiastical regime. The scholars of German universities had at the same time discovered historical and linguistic reasons for casting doubt on the traditional ascriptions of authorship and date associated with the Old Testament material. Even rumors of such activity, in the unsettled social and political atmosphere in the years around 1835, were enough to alarm the faithful. In response to the rumors, an increasingly vocal defense was launched by evangelicals, Nonconformists and High Churchmen alike to save the book which was at the heart of the society they knew and the religion they practiced. No longer were the tactics of defense however confined to the debates

of gentlemen. The number of publications involved and the size of audience reached changed dramatically. What emerged from the challenges posed by freethinking, German scholarship and science were definitions of doctrines such as inspiration and revelation, and intricate examples of biblical harmony and prophetic fulfilment. On the acceptance of these beliefs and proofs hung a man's faith and virtue. They proved to be rallying points around which the orthodox gathered in the coming controversy over higher criticism. They went to press with the sentiment:

The Bible...would not be the revelation of God if it did not contain within it, an antidote to such awful doctrines. Its evidences are, like the character it forms, founded upon a rock. In vain shall the rain descend, the winds blow, and the whirlwind and storm attack its base - it is immovable - 'the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it'.⁹⁷

The determination to save society in Britain from the evils of religious infidelity coincided with major changes in the printing and publishing trades. Efficiency in printing and an ever-growing number of literate churchmen continued to bring books and certainly pamphlets and tracts within the reach of the faithful. The result was a flood of commentaries, Scripture histories, harmonies, catechisms, guides to the prophecies and pious tracts designed to combat heresy by reinforcing the authority and inspiration of the Bible. Many, such as Thomas Hartwell Horne's Deism Refuted, or plain reasons for being a Christian (1819), were intended to be "cheap, concise and

useful manuals of Scripture evidences which could replace larger and more difficult volumes currently in print".⁹⁸ It was in such popular publications that the conventional view of the Bible was developed and articulated.

The orthodox of the eighteenth century, while defending the Bible as a revelation of God, readily admitted that men could discern independently certain divine truths. A change in emphasis occurred however in the nineteenth century. In the face of serious infidelity, religion as revealed tended to be the important thing, and tended to mean more than the addition of a few positive commands to natural religion. The whole concern rested with the reality and finality of that which God had specifically disclosed in a system of communicated truths. God, it was believed, had established a direct communication first with Adam, then with his immediate descendents, and then with the nation into which his descendents multiplied. With Moses, the divine words were preserved in written records for the first time. Thus, revelation in orthodox nineteenth century opinion was generally equated with the Bible. And, as the revelation of God, it could contain "nothing superfluous or defective".⁹⁹ A direct communication from the One who was perfect could not contain error, whether in matters spiritual, scientific or historical. The Bible was regarded as a letter from God to mankind, of which every word was accurate and pregnant with sacred significance.

Certain presumptions were a part of, and certain conclusions followed from, such a view of Scripture. A strictly defined view of the process of inspiration, or the way in which divine truths were communicated, was a key point in the conventional approach to the Bible. In the face of growing skepticism and doubt, the careful guidance of the biblical writers by the Holy Spirit in all matters was staunchly upheld.

In the published popular materials which were marketed for educated churchmen, the notion of inspiration was in fact given a more liberal slant than what was evidently held by and preached to the less sophisticated believer. Both classes however adhered to a strict view which left little room for the contradictions of science and history. Representative of the orthodox views early in the century were those expressed by Thomas Scott in the preface to his Commentary on the Bible, first published in 1788 and reissued over twelve times in the early decades of the nineteenth century. Scott defined inspiration as:

Such a complete and immediate communication by the Holy Spirit, to the minds of the sacred writers, of those things which could not have been otherwise known; and such an effectual superintendency, as to those particulars, concerning which they might otherwise obtain information; as sufficed absolutely to preserve them from every degree of error, in all things which could in the least affect any of the doctrines or precepts contained in their writings, or mislead any person, who considered them as a divine and infallible standard of truth and duty.¹⁰⁰

His definition, though strict, left open for future consideration the possibility of minor textual errors in the Scriptures as well as the presence of a human element

in the process of inspiration. It was a similar definition which appeared slightly later in the century in the work of the orthodox Anglican theologian William Lee in attempting to defend the inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible. It has been claimed that Lee's theory of inspiration represented a systematization of the kind of view that was predominant at the time of Coleridge's Confessions.¹⁰¹ Sanday asserted in his work on Inspiration that this version of the traditional theory was "the view commonly held fifty years ago".¹⁰²

Lee was prepared to admit that the Holy Spirit used human attributes in the process of inspiration. The Spirit did not employ a form of mechanical dictation but worked in and through individual characteristics, including the writer's own language and intellectual habits. The Bible however had been protected or "superintended" to prevent all possible errors or inaccuracies not only in matters supernaturally revealed but also in the knowledge acquired by natural means. This included details of history, geography and chronology while allowing for very minor contradictions or mistakes by those who copied the text. As Sanday has pointed out, there was no clear indication as to where these minor allowable errors were to stop, but it was generally agreed that they could not extend to material of any importance. "They would belong chiefly to the sphere of the text: It might be allowed that the true text could not always be discovered; but when once it had been discovered it could not be otherwise than infallible."¹⁰³

The Holy Bible, prepared and arranged by Rev. George D'Oyly and Rev. Richard Mant, showed a similar understanding of inspiration. It was "Mant's Bible", a large and heavy publication profusely illustrated, which George Eliot described as most commonly used after 1816.¹⁰⁴ In the introduction to the Bible it was claimed that:

When it is said that the Scripture is divinely inspired, it is not to be understood that God suggested every word, or dictated every expression. It appears from the different style in which the books are written, and from the different manner in which the same events are related and predicted by different authors, that the sacred penmen were permitted to write as their several tempers, understandings and habits of life, directed...But whatever distinctions we may make with respect to the sorts, degrees or modes of inspiration, we may rest assured that there is one property which belongs to every inspired writing, namely that it is free from error.¹⁰⁵

Those who had difficulties in accepting the Bible as the inspired revelation of God were often sent to read not the more lenient works of Lee but the work of the Swiss professor, S.R.L. Gaussen, entitled Theopneusty (1845).

Gaussen held and defended a rigid theory of verbal inspiration "with complete and unflinching intrepidity".¹⁰⁶

"The Scriptures are composed of books, of phrases and of words," he declared. "Without making any hypothesis upon the manner which God has adopted for dictating the one and the other, we maintain, with the Scriptures, that this is the Word of God, without any exception."¹⁰⁷

Gaussen made it clear that it was the book which was inspired and not the writers. Believers could dispense with the inspiration of thoughts - the writers may in fact have been idiots - but they must hold to the inspiration of language.

Although familiarity with theoretical definitions and academic variations was undoubtedly lacking in most conventional believers, in practice it is likely that they held to a form of literalism not unlike Gausson's. Every word in the Bible was both significant and free from any error. The "days" in the first chapter of Genesis were periods of twenty-four hours; the order of Creation was exactly as described. The serpent language was unquestionably the dialect of Eden. The popular conception of the Bible was based on a literal interpretation which was at variance with scholarly suggestions of allegory, poetry and metaphor.¹⁰⁸ The popular Scripture histories and commentaries did a great deal to encourage this view. Maps were provided showing the exact wanderings of Abraham and the children of Israel. Detailed descriptions of the location as well as the natural life in the Garden of Eden were given. Tables of ancient weights and measures lent credibility to the numerical details of the Old Testament.

Popular trust was extended to every detail of the biblical narrative and even beyond it. All on the printed page, even the contents of the margins, were from the pen of Almighty God himself. The dates of Archbishop Ussher's chronology were as fiercely defended as any dogma in the New Testament. Information concerning the personages to whom the books were traditionally ascribed was also believed to be verbally inspired, a point vocally defended in the controversy over historical and literary criticism. This view meant, according to the Authorised Version of the Bible, that Moses was the author of the Pentateuch,

Isaiah the author of Isaiah and David the composer of the Psalms. It was of particular concern at this early stage that the authenticity of the Pentateuch be defended, for here rested the foundations of salvation history. "There is some probability," wrote Scott, "in the opinion that the art of writing was first communicated by revelation to Moses, in order to perpetuate with certainty those facts, truths and laws which he employed to deliver Israel."¹⁰⁹ Scholars had found no trace of writing in the history of mankind until long after the days of Moses; it was only reasonable to assume that the art of expressing an almost infinite variety of sounds by interchanging a few letters or marks was a gift to man from heaven, and not a human invention. The accuracy of those parts of the sacred story which concerned the patriarchs and other predecessors of Moses was insured by the fact that God had ordained long lives for the Israelites, making it possible for events to be verbally related from one to the other. Publications such as Joseph Riddle's Manual of the Whole Scripture History (1857) often included chronological charts showing the birth and death date from Adam to Moses, and the overlap between each successive life span. Riddle and others insisted that such information was not given for curiosity's sake, but to show by how few steps the tradition of primal history had been handed down.

It was made clear in the orthodox approach that the Bible as the revelation of God was to be regarded as such in toto. No parts were to be excused from the requirements

of infallibility and harmony, since the human reason was unable to stand in judgment over the divine disclosure. There was of course information in the Bible that could be known through ordinary means, but this did not preclude the supervision of the Holy Spirit nor the perfection of the material:

If it be asked by what rule we are to distinguish the inspired from the uninspired parts of these books, it is to be answered, that no general rule can be prescribed for that purpose. Nor is it necessary that we should be able to make any such discrimination. It is enough for us to know that every writer of the Old Testament was inspired, and that the whole of the history it contains, without any exception or reserve, is true.¹¹⁰

The ability of the human "verifying faculty" to decide on the limits of revelation presented a key point of controversy in the popular debate over higher criticism later in the century. For the conventional believer however there was no doubt that the Bible was "wholly and exclusively" the Word of God.¹¹¹ This assertion presented certain difficulties both for the evangelical and the Christian who depended upon rational arguments. There were parts of the Old Testament which had to be explained if they were to be included as divine revelation and at the same time not offend the acute moral sense of the Christian. There were also obscurities in the biblical record which contradicted the reason of the reasonable believer and so constituted particular problems.

Most of the more popular literature on the Bible attempted to show that the atrocities of the Old Testament were neither unjustified nor against the righteous will

of God. John Kitto, in the second volume of Daily Bible Illustrations examined the question: What right did the Israelites have to wage a war of extermination against nations who had never given them any offense? The answer given was that Canaan was a free and absolute gift from God "by which all ideas of human right are chiefly excluded". "But while, on the one hand, the donation of this land was an act of the Lord's free favour to the Israelites, the deprivation of it was no less an act of his retributive justice - of such justice as it behooved a moral governor of the world to administer against a people laden with iniquity..."¹¹² Gaussen, in a popular work on inspiration, claimed, "It has been generally asked, if we could discover any divinity in certain passages of the Scriptures too vulgar to be inspired. We believe we have shown how much wisdom, on the contrary, shines in these passages, when, instead of judging them hastily, we seek in them the teachings of the Holy Spirit."¹¹³

The identification of the entire Bible as the revelation of God to man implied that, given time and patient study, a meaning could be teased out of even the most obscure passages in the Bible. Later in the century, J. Allenson Picton described from his childhood the journeyman house painter Tom Dickinson who was a member of an independent chapel and a diligent student of the Old Testament. Dickinson derived great pleasure from finding some divine light in Hebrew obscurities. He commented on Deuteronomy 10:7 for example: "At conversion the sinner begins an important journey. He leaves a state wherein are no watersprings of

divine influences to journey in the land of uprightness, a land of rivers of waters."¹¹⁴

Orthodox believers admitted that there were some things in the Bible which were simply beyond Present human comprehension. A pious Victorian churchman was once asked what he made of the text: "For Parbar westward, four at the causeway and tw^o at Parbar." The answer was that there must be a mystical meaning in it which would someday be revealed. It was in fact such obscurities that witnessed to the divine origin of the Bible, for a book which claimed to be a revelation of God could not be devoid of mystery. Incomprehensibility was inseparable from God and his works, as the natural world indicated. Such mysteries should not be seen as contradicting, but only surpassing reason. They served a practical purpose for believers in laying the foundations of future hope and inculcating love, humility and gratitude.

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h For the traditionalists, the best proofs for the inspiration of the Bible continued to be the external evidences of miracle and prophecy. It was claimed that the miraculous happenings of the Bible attested to the divine mission of the biblical authors. As the narratives in which they were described were published soon after the events, and as the were accepted by men contemporary with the sacred authors, their veracity could not be challenged. There was a strong indication in the popular material however that for nineteenth century believers, prophecy far exceeded miracles as conclusive proof of inspiration. Edward Bickersteth claimed in 1839 that next to the re-

generation which the Scriptures effected, "the evidence of prophecy is of all others the most convincing, satisfactory, and even overwhelming to a wise, learned and candid mind".¹¹⁵ T.H. Horne agreed that though miracles and prophecies were both calculated for use in "remoter times" as well as for the early Christians, yet the evidence from miracles seemed to be particularly addressed to the latter as that from prophecy was meant for more contemporary Christians. Indeed, prophecy's value increased with age: "To us this amazing web is still more unfolded and more of its wonderful texture is displayed."¹¹⁶ Several things foretold by the prophets of the Old Testament had become matters of fact and certainty to their successors. In "The Poor Man's Guide to Understanding the Prophecies" it was claimed that:

The attention of all classes of religious persons has been much attracted of late to the subject of prophecy. This has been occasioned partly by the number of able writers who have of late years written on the subject, and partly from the sudden and extraordinary changes which, within our memories, have taken place within the church and the world: changes which have led to a well-founded apprehension that, 'the time draweth nigh when the mystery of God will be accomplished'.¹¹⁷

A massive amount of popular material on the prophecies of the Bible was published to convince the skeptical and fortify the faithful. It was "popular material" both in purpose and format. Edward Brackenbury directed his 1802 work to the "members of a country congregation". Bickersteth laid down certain principles of interpretation to aid the ordinary reader, advocating a literal approach

to the prophecies as well as the acquisition of some historical knowledge to supplement biblical studies. Brackenbury presented readers with page after page, clearly organized, of prophecy and fulfilment based chronologically on the events of Jesus' life. Truth frae 'Mang the Heather, which went into its sixth edition in 1856, was a prize-winning essay in a competition on "The Evidences of Christianity". The work of a "bona fide Scotch shepherd", the book aimed at providing a summary of Christian evidences, especially prophecy, which would be interesting and edifying to the working classes who could not master the work of Paley.¹¹⁸ This was one area, it was claimed elsewhere, in which the poor could share in the fruits of the labors of the learned.¹¹⁹

The popular material embodied certain general ideas on the nature of prophecy. First and foremost was the belief that prophecy was essentially predictive and accurate in detail. Horne emphatically wrote that prophecy was not simply human foresight or sophisticated perception; rather it was the direct communication of God concerning distant and apparently improbable events. Truth frae 'Mang the Heather also emphasized that prophecy was the foretelling of future events by holy men of God who "spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost".¹²⁰

The popular works also generally encouraged the belief that prophecies were meant to be taken literally where not clearly symbolical. This was important if not only learned divines but Christians in general were to grasp the full significance of the evidence supplied by prophecy.

The "figurative interpretation", claimed Bickersteth, had caused prophecy to lose much of its value. Yet only when the context, or further inspiration, directed should a passage be taken as symbolical. This point was closely related to the desire of many orthodox authors to rescue the study of prophecy from crude and unprofitable speculation about the future. It was true that as the whole of human history was included in the biblical scheme of prediction, one could locate the year 1835 or 1850 in the pattern and thus, as was invariably recommended, prepare for the "approaching convulsion". As an antidote to infidelity however the meaning of prophecy was to be sought in events which had actually taken place. In the nineteenth century these most commonly involved the declarations foretelling the demise of the ancient empires and especially of the Jews, and of the coming of the Messiah. One of the most popular works dealing with the ancient empires and the Jews was undoubtedly that published in 1823 by Alexander Keith, entitled Evidence for the Truth of the Christian Religion derived from the Literal Fulfilment of Prophecy. Tales from travellers in the East made Keith aware of the valuable and "growing" evidence which prophecy could provide to bolster the Christian faith. He popularized the correlation between what was foretold in the Old Testament and what appeared before the eyes of explorers in his work. Going through forty standard editions by 1873 as well as editions in Gaelic, French and German, the book met the skepticism of the age by asserting

that, "Researches of Travellers in Palestine have been so abundant, and the prophecies thereby verified so numerous and distinct, that no labour is requisite for elucidating their truth, but to examine and compare the predictions and events; and the literal prophecies need no other interpretation than the literal facts."¹²¹

Chapter VII of the book for example dealt with the biblical statements which precisely foretold the history of the Arabs. Concerning Ishmael and his descendents it was said, "He will be a wild man. His hand will be against every man, and every man's hand will be against him: he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren." Keith wrote that the Arabs had indeed maintained their independence, not only remaining unconquered but hostile as well. Travellers had described them as armed against mankind, plundering for their livelihood and dwelling among other nations as a wild people.¹²² The prophecies described in chapter VI on Nineveh and Babylon were particularly fascinating to nineteenth century readers, especially when their fulfilments were illustrated by elaborate lithographs. The identity of the site of Babylon, Keith claimed, had been confirmed along with every general and every particular prediction concerning it. One only had to present the facts to doubters. Those who visited Babylon concurred in acknowledging that the desolation was exactly as foretold. With regards to the prophecy, "Babylon shall become heaps," travellers claimed that, "The whole face of the country is covered with vestiges of buildings, in some places consisting of brick walls surprisingly fresh; in

others merely a vast succession of mounds of rubbish."¹²³ Similarly R.K. Porter wrote, "There are many dens of wild beasts in various parts...These caverns over which the chambers of majesty have been spread are now the refuge of jackals and other savage animals." This confirmed the prediction in Isaiah 13:21 that, "Wild beasts of the desert shall lie there, and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures."¹²⁴

The Bible, as the revelation of God, had, according to the orthodox, all the marks of authenticity. Regarded as supreme proofs by conventional believers were miracles and prophecies; also ranked high however by the evangelicals such as Simeon was the compelling unity and harmony in all that had been revealed as well as the internal, regenerative process which the Word through the Spirit effected. It was especially important that believers study these evidences in order to repel the attacks of the skeptic: "If indeed the unbeliever were to give impartial consideration to these evidences he could not but acknowledge their cogency and see the truth of what they are adduced to prove."¹²⁵

An inspired book was believed to be harmonious and, like their eighteenth century ancestors, the nineteenth century orthodox were intent on showing the Bible to be so. The old orthodoxy, claimed Robert Horton, insisted that the Bible from Genesis to Revelation was a smooth, consistent voice of God, like a Delphic oracle.¹²⁶ One was to read it like God's letter to the human race; if he

came across any contradictions or inconsistencies, he was to attribute these to his own feebleness of apprehension, but he was never to allow that there could be anything wrong with the book. Piety was to be proven by showing that inconsistencies could be harmonized. If for example it said in II Chronicles 16:6 that Jehoshaphat "took away the high places and the Asherim out of Judah", and then in 20:33, "howbeit the high places were not taken away", it was proof of reverence to the infallible Word to show how the high places were both taken away and not taken away by Jehoshaphat. Many of the popular publications engaged in similar reconciliatory exercises. One Scripture history claimed that while Genesis 1:1 and chapter 2 appeared to be contradictory, they were in fact not so. In the interval between the creation ex nihilo and chapter 2, Satan fell and havoc was wrought on what was already made. One is left therefore with a creation out of existing materials in the second account.

The harmony of the sacred book could also be demonstrated in more subtle ways. Typology, or the study of the foreshadowings of the Christian dispensation in the events and persons of the Old Testament, increased in popularity. Patrick Fairbairn, in his Typology of Scripture, defended the traditional view of the Bible by presenting a comprehensive survey of the types in the Old Testament, and extracting Christian significance from the most trivial circumstances. Jabez Burns, a dissenting minister, produced an abbreviated and more popular work

on this subject entitled Sketches of Sermons on Types and Metaphors.¹²⁷ Christ, he claimed, was typified by the manna received and used by the Israelites in a number of ways: (1) It fell round about the camp; so Jesus is made known by the preaching of the Gospel and the ordinances of Christianity; (2) the Israelites had to go forth and gather it; so Jesus, the gift of God, must be received into the heart by a believing appropriation of him to our souls; (3) the manna was to be prepared by being ground and baked with fire; thus, it was necessary that Christ should suffer and bear our iniquities, that the wrath, justly denounced against sin, should consume him as the great sacrifice.

Finally, along with the belief in an inspired and infallible book, there existed a concern to affirm the Bible as a source of regeneration. Both the skeptics and the orthodox in the early eighteenth century and later had human virtue as their goal; the conflict occurred over whether or not natural religion was sufficient to achieve this end. Churchmen therefore continued to press the point that the Bible, as the special source of revelation, could work wonders in transforming lives of misery into lives of piety. As Scott claimed in his Commentary, there were many thousands who had been reclaimed from a profane and immoral course of conduct to a life of sobriety and truth. The Bible, it was believed, was certainly responsible for the remarkable success which the foreign missions were enjoying: "Candor requires us to regard

all the great moral changes that have taken place in foreign lands during the last half century as attributable to the influence of divine truth, circulated and preached principally under the direction of British wisdom and the auspices of British piety."¹²⁸ Domestic virtue and tranquillity were also seen as stemming from the words of the sacred Scriptures. A colorful series of lithographs were published in 1849 which told the tale of Henry Brown, a mechanic who succumbs to drunkenness and reduces his family to poverty.¹²⁹ A home missionary visits the household, and his reading of the Bible, without note or comment, has a startling effect on Brown:

The words of the Sacred Volume touch the heart of Brown who, waiting for the departure of the Missionary (a feeling of shame for being seen in his present condition having passed across his mind) jumps up and taking the Bible the Missionary had left, swears upon the Book of Salvation, to reform and lead a new life. His wife and children, overpowered by the joyful event, praise Heaven that THE WORD has already borne fruit.

It was believed in the case of Henry Brown, and many others, that the words of the Bible themselves, without any explanatory note or elaboration, were sufficient to stimulate a transformation of life. The words of the Bible were treated as if they possessed a certain charm. Picton mentions the detached verses hung in railway station waiting rooms in the hope of saving some passing soul. The waiting room Bibles as well as the texts of "wayside pulpits" were compared in the nineteenth century with the wayside crucifixes and shrines on the Continent which excited the "grudging admiration" of the Protestant tourist.¹³⁰

There was little to indicate that the conventional believer would be anything less than successful in his attempts to repel the onslaught of skepticism and infidelity. It is true that such attacks provoked a certain uneasiness, but as the decades passed and the infallible and inspired Word was preached and taught and defended, the worst appeared to be over and a mood of popular confidence, so typically Victorian, was established. In 1834 the Oxford Press, one of the three publishing houses permitted to print the Authorized Version under the Bible patent, began to mechanize its printing processes. The Cambridge Press quickly followed their example between 1838 and 1840, thus opening what believers lauded as a new era in the history of Bible distribution and reading. Encouraged by the mission efforts of the British and Foreign Bible Society, the Oxford Press alone produced 2,612,750 Bibles and 2,062,050 Testaments between 1837 and 1847. The market after 1830 was also flooded with a number of family and reference Bibles, the most popular being Charles Knight's Pictorial Bible (1836-1838) and John Cassell's Illustrated Family Bible (1859).

The proliferation of Bibles and the social and moral regeneration which that implied for conventional believers however was only one element in the building of popular confidence. It also appeared to the early Victorians that the advances which scientists were making were being successfully reconciled with an infallible Bible. The

Bridgewater Treatises for example made it clear that the eighteenth century synthesis could still stand, representing as they did the "late flowering of the physico-theology" of the previous century.¹³¹ Geologists such as Buckland and Sedgwick used their investigations into rocks and dinosaurs to preach the Designer of the universe, and had little difficulty in reconciling their studies with the Bible. Numerous Mosaic geologies were published assuring believers that the new discoveries in no way threatened the inspiration of the Bible.

Finally, churchmen were reassured by the tales that were drifting home from travellers in the East that the Book in which they believed was authentic and accurate. Alexander Keith's book told of the miraculous confirmation of biblical records in the wastelands of Palestine. The climate, geography and customs of the East provided believers with a source of information and verification which appeared to be providentially designed for an age of growing skepticism.

It was greatly distressing therefore that the "infidelity" which believers met after 1860 was not at all as they had expected. Certain that they knew and had made known the defenses which could be relied upon in battle, they were often shocked and angered at their apparent failure to halt the development of science and biblical studies in radical new directions. Indeed much of the violent language and sentiments displayed in the controversy over higher criticism can be accounted for not only on theological grounds but simply because men could not

believe that the old defenses and doctrines were no longer viable. Perhaps, it was hoped, they would become so if shouted with more conviction and persistence. In his Memoirs Herbert Ryle observed that, "Instinctively men drew together, to repel, as they felt, the assaults of an audacious skepticism. Their very fervour and sincerity, in many cases, imparted to their views an equal degree of bitterness."¹³² Such bitterness was evident in popular reactions to Essays and Reviews and Bishop Colenso.

The Higher Criticism Comes to Britain: "Essays and Reviews"
and Bishop Colenso

At the time Essays and Reviews was published, biblical scholarship and related theological studies in Britain had in many respects broken from the traditions of the past. Coleridge and Maurice had rejected the conventional views of inspiration in favor of broader ones. The Bible had been studied as a part of the mainstream of oriental history and literature. Thomas Arnold had suggested that the value of prophecy lay in its contemporary meaning and not in its accurate predictions. It is true that these individuals for most of the century represented isolated pockets of thought. Their work troubled academic circles mainly, with the exception of publications such as Milman's History of the Jews. Most churchmen were preoccupied with a rapidly changing political and social situation, or with imminent ecclesiastical disruption, or with the oppression of establishment. Yet

the general public was becoming increasingly aware that a crisis of major proportions was pending over the Bible. If churchmen could not articulate the theology of Maurice or the conclusions of the German critics, they were at least aware that some long-held views were not in accord with the conclusions of science or their own moral convictions.

There were some early and isolated attempts to popularize the new views on the Bible. The sermons of Arnold and Maurice for example contained exhortations to adapt and broaden views on inspiration, revelation and prophecy. John Wright, a Unitarian minister, as early as 1849 published a popular work to determine "if there is some other light in which we can view the Bible", besides that of verbal inspiration. In the preface to his Popular Introduction to the Bible he claimed:

There are many little books, already in existence, professing to answer some such purpose, as "Bible Companion", "Helps to the Reading of the Bible", etc. and it might be thought that these supersede the necessity of any other work on the subject. But these books, as far as I am acquainted with them, all go on the theory of verbal inspiration, and, moreover, they take everything for granted. They state, for instance, that Moses wrote the Pentateuch, without saying a word as to how we know that he did, or hinting at the existence of two opinions on the subject.¹³³

In the book the author gave certain reasons for believing that Moses was not the author of the Pentateuch as we now have it. He explained the possible existence of Elohist and Jahwistic documents as well as certain arguments for the late dating of Isaiah 40 through 66 and the Book of Daniel.

Yet the publication of Essays and Reviews in 1860 has been looked upon as a turning point in the history of biblical criticism in Britain. It provoked a crisis of large proportions and was responsible primarily for transferring the critical battle from German to English soil. Most historians admit that the essays said little which was new; their importance lay in the fact that they were written by a number of devout churchmen in a spirit of unity and that they received so much publicity in a time of turmoil.

At the instigation of Henry Bristow Wilson, six clergymen and one layman agreed to contribute to the volume in order to reconcile the Christian faith with modern thought. The essayists saw that a divorce between the Church and the intelligence of the nation was rapidly taking place. New knowledge, religious and scientific, was accumulating:

Either theology would adjust itself to the changed conditions and so remain a living study, or it would refuse to have anything to do with them, with the inevitable result that the Church...would cease to command the support of the thinkers of the nation. It was to prevent the occurrence of such a catastrophe that the essayists published their volume.¹³⁴

Three leading ideas can be traced throughout all of the essays. The belief that all truth, including that discovered by historical and scientific investigation, was from God was stressed. There was therefore no need to set Christian faith in opposition to the thinking of modern man; the right to free inquiry could thus be welcomed by the church. The essays also claimed that believers

should not tie the truth of Christianity to the factual truth of detailed records. Parable, myth, legend and poetry could be effective vehicles of religious truth, even if the events described did not actually happen. Finally, the essays generally argued that the truth of divine revelation was confirmed by its moral impact and not by the attending circumstances of miracle or fulfilled prophecy.

The "battle for the Bible" which believers saw taking shape in Britain particularly involved the essays of Benjamin Jowett and Rowland Williams. Jowett, regius professor of Greek at Oxford, contributed an essay on "The Interpretation of Scripture", originally intended as one of the dissertations in the second edition of his 1859 commentary on Paul's epistles. In the essay Jowett argued for a modification of the current views of biblical inspiration and interpretation:

h/ The subject will clear itself if we bear in mind two considerations: - First, that the nature of inspiration can only be known from the examination of Scripture. There is no other source to which we can turn for information; and we have no right to assume some imaginary doctrine of inspiration like the infallibility of the Roman Catholic Church. To the question, 'What is inspiration?' the first answer therefore is, 'That idea of Scripture which we gather from the knowledge of it.' It is no mere a priori notion, but one to which the book itself is a witness...The other consideration is one which has been neglected by writers on this subject. It is this - that any true doctrine of inspiration must conform to all well-ascertained facts of history or of science.¹³⁵

Only from a study of the Bible itself could readers discover the true nature of inspiration which, according to Jowett, had been previously taken to mean a formal dic-

tation rather than the movement of the prophetic spirit. No theory of inspiration was possible which did not conform to modern scientific and historical knowledge, and which was not in keeping with the demands of a man's own conscience. "The whole essay," wrote V.F. Storr, "is a plea for the free use of critical reason in the study of Scripture, and for the recognition of the dependence of theology upon the growth of new knowledge in all departments of research."¹³⁶

Rowland Williams' essay dealt more particularly with the new criticism, heralding as it did the "long-delayed arrival of German biblical scholarship into the Church of England".¹³⁷ The essay reviewed the biblical researches of Baron von Bunsen, a traveller and diplomat who eventually became the ambassador from Prussia to Queen Victoria. His studies of the Bible especially as seen in his massive Bibelwerk drew heavily upon Ewald and Niebuhr, and rejected the extreme of Tübingen radicalism and the conservatism of Hengstenberg. While believing that a new reformation was needed in English biblical scholarship to sweep away the despotism of orthodoxy, Bunsen, as a member of the mediating school, went to great pains to point out his identification with the evangelical piety of the British public. During his lifetime his efforts were of some avail; he was in great favor at court and mingled easily with churchmen "who made a polite distinction between his person and his ideas". The distinction did not extend beyond Bunsen's death in

1860. The Christian Remembrancer claimed a few years later that, "Nothing strikes us as more remarkable, and, we may add, more insulting than the recklessness and careless haste with which he obtruded what he knew the vast majority of English churchmen regarded as poison upon our reading public..."¹³⁸ A motion of sympathy to the diplomat's family at the time of his death which referred to Bunsen as "a great Christian statesman" was withdrawn by the Evangelical Alliance after objections that Bunsen questioned the truth of the Pentateuch.

It is hardly surprising therefore that in these same years a review of Bunsen's work would be received with little favor. The Christian Observer for example claimed that, "In place of an 'essay', he gives us a 'review'. He takes up the whole circle of Bunsen's wild profanities, and thus brings into the compass of forty-three pages a mass of reckless infidelity, compared with which the writings of Voltaire and Paine were comparatively harmless."¹³⁹ The "profanities" to which the review referred were drawn largely from the works of Continental scholars and included such statements as: the books of Moses were a compilation of only gradual growth; the "child" of Isaiah 7 was in fact to be born in the reign of Ahaz; chapters 40 to 66 of the same book are not the work of the prophet Isaiah but are anonymous works of a later date; the Book of Daniel is not authentic history, and belongs to the second century B.C. rather than the sixth; and, much of the language of the Old Testament is that of

imaginative poetry rather than factual prose.

When Essays and Reviews was first published, it attracted little general notice. The essays were read chiefly by interested clergy, and remained in the ecclesiastical and academic domain until October of 1860 when a jubilant article in The Westminster Review entitled "Neo-Christianity" moved churchmen to alarm. Frederic Harrison, the author, triumphantly catalogued the unorthodoxies of the essayists and expressed his delight that the views for which the Positivists had been contending were now officially proclaimed by leading churchmen. The essays thus became the center of a protracted controversy which kept the cluster of Broad Church ideas on the Bible before the public. Samuel Wilberforce's denunciation of the essays in The Quarterly Review of 1861 sent the number in which it appeared through five editions. Not all of the popular reviews condemned the essayists. Stanley, in The Edinburgh Review, and a series of articles in The Guardian, warned against unnecessary panic, while believing that the negative tone and excessive naturalism of some of the works was unfortunate. The main note sounded by the press however was one of denunciation. The British and Foreign Evangelical Review claimed that the volume had done more than any other book "which has appeared since Strauss' Life of Jesus...to startle and alarm the Christian public".¹⁴⁰ The Christian Observer claimed that,

Most of our readers have seen, or heard of,
the new sort of firearms recently invented in

the United States, and called, after the inventor's name, Colt Revolvers. By one of these small but terrible engines, a man is able to discharge, one after the other, the bullets from seven barrels without moving a single finger. The idea seems to have been caught and copied in this volume. Seven men of some note have combined together to produce this quiet-looking but deadly engine.¹⁴¹

The attention which the press devoted to the essays, as well as the ensuing trial of Williams and Wilson and the judgment of the Privy Council, kept the position maintained by the essayists alive. By 1865 the book had sold out of its fifth edition, and had become a favorite subject of popular conversation. The writer Mary Howitt recorded in 1862 that the cook in the house where she was staying had read the book. In one of Trollope's novels a character claimed that the book came "direct from the evil one". Sophia Blake, the daughter of a staunch Evangelical proctor of Doctors' Commons, wrote of her interest in getting the book to her parents in Edinburgh. When the popular outcry reached its peak in 1864 with the decision of the Privy Council, Lucy Lyttleton wrote in her diary:

There is violent excitement at the P.C. having passed a judgment in favour of Wilson and Williams...Some people think the decision of terrible consequence, but Papa and others take the more reasonable line of viewing it as what it is - a mere legal acquittal of men whose opinions the Church has disavowed and protested against as strongly as she is capable of doing. And the judgment carefully disclaims any intention of expressing approval of the horrid book.¹⁴²

There were several points made in the essays which caused distress among the faithful. Primarily disconcerting was the system which, the reviewers claimed,

"leavened" all the essays. Alienated from English theology and thought, the essays brought before the public "the destructive theology of Germany, and the Hegelian philosophy on which the former rests".¹⁴³ In critical reviews of Jowett's essay, the doctrine of development was regarded as a foregone conclusion: "His analogy of faith is the idealist philosophy which he not unfrequently appeals to, as if he did not see that this puts Hegelianism in the very same controlling place where others put the doctrines of the Church, and makes everything in the divine word be seen with a jaundiced eye or through a discoloured medium."¹⁴⁴ The consequences of such a view were grave: Apostolic Christianity was not an ideal to be reproduced, but an antiquated philosophy which would soon be superceded. "Theirs is a Christianity without Christ, an idea with no corresponding reality, a spectre without body or substance, and they surrender their minds without hesitation to a negation fraught with consequences which it is fearful to contemplate."¹⁴⁵

Causing outrage also was the essayists' tendency to devalue the importance of miracles and especially prophecies as evidence for divine revelation. Prophecy, the main pillar of faith for nineteenth century orthodox Christians, was reduced to sagacious conjecturing about the future when coming events were casting their shadows before the prophets, or to material descriptive of contemporary events only. What could not be disposed of in these two ways was explained on the basis of an incorrect rendering of the text. Thus, "the Mighty God" of Isaiah

should be more accurately rendered, "The strong and mighty one", so diminishing evidence for the deity of the child.

Singled out for attack by Wilberforce, and disturbing to the minds of other orthodox churchmen, was the notion in the essays of a "verifying faculty", by which the human reason, with conscience as the interpreter, could decide which portions of Scripture were to be accepted as divine truth and which were not. According to these critics, claimed Wilberforce, if the doctrine of atonement as commonly conceived was not in accord with a man's ideas about the nature of God, it must be set aside. But to the orthodox, the idea of a man's reason passing judgment on things divine was unthinkable. Man's reason had been evil ever since the Fall, and therefore incapable of seeing moral truth without a divine revelation.

The essays however presented nothing to the British public which had not already been postulated in the critical and theological works of the earlier part of the century. Coleridge's idea of inspiration depended heavily upon the "verifying faculty"; Arnold's idea of prophecy depended on the moral significance of the words of the ancient seers. There were other reasons for the intensity of the outcry which was evoked by Essays and Reviews. One factor certainly was the identity of the essayists, six of them ordained members of the Church of England. As a result, attention was drawn to the book, and the offense was heightened. The Christian Remembrancer

urged that while it may be excusable for a Lutheran such as Bunsen to assume the role of "a philosopher setting loose to our Articles", it was difficult to see how a clergyman bound by the Articles and Prayer Book could justly do so: "We have no wish to interfere with the speculations of a Lutheran, but it is idle to pretend that such theories are reconcilable with the doctrines of the Church of England."¹⁴⁶ The Christian Observer compared the essays with the manifesto of the Oxford Movement: "Tract XC was meant to establish the principle that a man might retain the orders and benefices of the Church, without believing the Articles. The present volume is meant to establish the principle that a man may retain the orders and benefices of the Church, without believing the Bible. Clearly this is the worst and most perilous of the two."¹⁴⁷

Disquieting also was the unity of effort evident in the essays. Even within the ranks of the clergy were to be found a few who wished to infuse theology with a new spirit, and who believed that they could engender some public support for their opinions. The British and Foreign Evangelical Review declared that the impression made from this "portentous phenomenon" was deep, "partly from the fact that the volume is the manifesto or declaration of a body of men who, like the French Encyclopedists, have come to act in concert..."¹⁴⁸ In spite of the fact that only two of the essayists were convicted of heresy, the approbation which Wilson and Williams met extended to the other authors as well. It was agreed in the press that while the writers could not individually be held responsible

for what their colleagues claimed, there was little doubt that each could endorse the work of the others. Thus, while Frederick Temple's essay was not quite so offensive, there was "deep concern at seeing the name of the headmaster of Rugby connected with the other sceptics who have composed the volume".¹⁴⁹ Wilberforce made the point that joint authorship implied joint responsibility: if divergence from the Christian faith was not the same in all compositions, the flaw of encouraging the human reason to judge things divine did appear in all.

The hope that such concerted efforts would receive at least some support was implied by the publication of the essays - and denounced by most reviews. The British and Foreign Evangelical Review claimed that, "The publication of such a volume - at once the manifesto of a party and a challenge to British theologians - evinces a certain measure of boldness. Still more, perhaps, it indicates a confidence on the part of the authors that these opinions have taken root, and may count upon support."¹⁵⁰ The press generally agreed however that the essayists had "grievously miscalculated". The contents of the essays as well as the negative and violent tone of some made it impossible for any Christian, let alone a member of the Church of England, to offer Wilson and his colleagues their support. Even those who supported the Broad Church school, though not free from dangerous doctrinal errors, at least did not forfeit the essentials of Christianity and so could not be considered allies of the essayists.

What Essays and Reviews accomplished in terms of popularizing biblical criticism was largely negative as well as enduring. It is unlikely that the actual processes and results of the higher criticism were widely communicated. Williams specifically claimed of course that the Pentateuch as we now have it was not written by Moses, and that the Book of Daniel could be safely placed in the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes. But the order of the Pentateuchal documents remained an unsolved problem at the time of Bunsen's death, and the nature of the essays prevented any protracted arguments on the methodology of the critics. As a result, what were eventually revealed as the sound conclusions of biblical research appeared to the public as preposterous and unfounded claims. Williams' essay particularly was denounced for presenting the public with an "unscrupulous assertion of unproved propositions".¹⁵¹

Also inhibiting a favorable public reaction to criticism was the failure of the essayists to devote enough effort to elaborating upon the way in which they saw criticism as positively contributing to the development of Christian faith. Regardless of the implicit as well as explicit attempts to maintain a stance of faith, the essayists were primarily regarded as the "Seven against Christ". There could be no reconciliation in the eyes of churchmen and the religious press. It was here indeed that some reviewers saw a significant distinction between the Broad Churchmen and the essayists:

We can...draw a line between the essayists and an Arnold, a Hare, and even a Maurice, notwithstanding the negative attitude which the latter assume to various points which we must indicate as precious truth. The great dividing point is the person of Christ, and all depends on the consideration whether the progress they aim at is in the sphere of union to Him or apart from Him.¹⁵²

The idea of inspiration had been evaporated in the crucible of criticism and grave doubts had been cast over the narratives of the New Testament. Christianity, according to the essayists, was already an obsolete and antiquated religion which would fade in the light of modern thinking. "Theirs is a Christianity without Christ," claimed one review, "an idea with no corresponding reality."¹⁵³

Public hostility was perhaps expressed most concretely in the two declarations drawn up after the publication of the essays. The Oxford Declaration of 1864, signed by 11,000 clergymen, maintained "without reserve or qualification the inspiration and Divine authority of the whole canonical Scriptures, as not only containing but being the Word of God". A lay address of similar sentiments and 137,000 signatures was presented at Lambeth Palace shortly thereafter. Biblical criticism and the exact nature of inspiration became matters of public debate. The alarm that was raised and the impressions that were made put the new scholarship and theology on the defensive for decades to come. It was to be years before the largely negative feelings attached to Essays and Reviews were modified. V.F. Storr has commented on this period of theological development: "I do not say that

the shock was not needed. But the book would have better commended itself to a conservative religious public if its utterances had been less charged with dynamite."¹⁵⁴

J.W. Colenso's work on the Pentateuch also provoked a widespread crisis and fostered similar negative feelings with regards to the higher criticism. In 1862 the Bishop, already the author of a distinguished textbook on arithmetic used in nearly every school as well as the royal classroom, published the first part of a series of volumes entitled The Pentateuch and the Book of Joshua Critically Examined. Though he began his career holding very traditional views on the nature and authority of the Bible, Colenso admitted that even in his early days as tutor at Cambridge, he was "uneasy" about some of the more bloodthirsty parts of the Old Testament. The questions of his African converts about the accuracy of the Genesis account and the morality of some of the Mosaic laws brought Colenso's personal crisis to a climax. He launched into a "heroic" course of reading which included the bulk of German biblical scholarship as it existed at that time, and which resulted in the seven part series on the Pentateuch and Joshua.¹⁵⁵

Part One, the most notorious section of the whole publication, was written to destroy what Colenso saw as a deceitful approach to the Bible. The literalists had concealed or twisted the plain truth of the Bible for nearly two centuries, and Colenso believed that it was his duty, as pastor and leader, to lay before the church

at large the evidence against the historicity of certain passages. Colenso claimed that the numerical facts of the Old Testament particularly, if they were studied and laid before the public, would speak for themselves. There were numerous exaggerations and inaccuracies to which he drew attention. Leviticus 8:14 for example claimed that the whole assembly of Israel was gathered at the door of the tabernacle. Through careful calculation, Colenso discovered that the court was only 1,692 square yards, whereas the assembly of Israel, consisting of 2,000,000 people, would have covered 201,180 square yards, even if packed closely together. Colenso's purpose however was not solely to show how the narrative contradicted a man's common sense. There was a question of morality at stake, for if one could not accept some of the historical accounts as accurate, one may not be required to believe that the God of Israel behaved in a cruel and barbarous manner.

The second and following parts of the series had a more positive tone. It is here in fact that Colenso made a lasting and significant contribution to biblical scholarship which was greatly overlooked. He showed for example how one could separate the writings in the Pentateuch in which God is referred to as Elohim from those in which he is called Jahweh. He affirmed that Deuteronomy was a product of the reign of Josiah, possibly connected with Jeremiah, and by the time part V was published he was able to distinguish a "second Jahwist" and a "second

Elohist" among the authors of the Pentateuch. He argued finally that the priestly code was the latest of the Pentateuchal sources, a step which revealed him as a serious and progressive critic in his own right.

Colenso's work is relevant to this discussion because of its two-fold effect: It did spread in some measure certain principles about the Bible and critical studies to an otherwise ignorant if literate public. It also however provoked an intensely hostile reaction to progressive biblical studies, associating in the minds of the public the iconoclastic tendencies of part I with the more solid scholarship of the remaining sections. Part I, when it appeared in the bookshops on October 29, 1862, was "a great success".¹⁵⁶ Colenso himself estimated that nearly 8,000 copies had been sold in three weeks. Two editions of part I came out before the end of 1862 and by the end of 1863, three more were published. The work in its entirety however covered over 3,400 pages and retailed at over £4, factors clearly working against popular consumption. Colenso himself brought out an abridged edition of parts I to IV, but the need for something less tedious and thorough was still evident. In 1884, under the editorship of Joachim Kaspary, the Humanitarian Publishing Association published A People's Abridgment of Bishop Colenso's Critical Examination of the Pentateuch and the Book of Joshua, containing summaries of the first three parts of the original work. "The editor's design," it was claimed, "has been to make Bishop Colenso's wise opinions

popular among all classes of laymen and clergymen, as well as among their mothers, sisters, wives and daughters, in order to exterminate superstitious, as well as to foster religious, sentiments, not only among men but also among women, who have been too long either neglected or deceived."¹⁵⁷

Seven years later Florence Gregg, under the auspices of the Sunday School Association, published The Story of Bishop Colenso, the Friend of the Zulus for children. She told in simple story form of Colenso's struggle with the questions of the Zulus, and of his search into the writings of other scholars, "especially those whose views were most orthodox".¹⁵⁸ Her young readers were told further that: "As a result of this examination he came to the conclusion that the books were of different ages, and by different writers, that a very small portion, if any, was from the hand of Moses himself, and that they were by no means historical in character..."¹⁵⁹

Colenso's work stirred up a controversy with the orthodox in an atmosphere already charged by the shock of Darwin and the heterodoxy of the essayists. Hinchliff, Colenso's twentieth century biographer, claims that the Bishop was subjected to "hysterical abuse".¹⁶⁰ It is probably true that, as Pusey observed, the book would not have been read by so many if he had been Mr. Colenso.¹⁶¹ The press, the academic world, even his close personal friends expressed dismay if not hostility at "the mathematician masquerading as theologian".¹⁶² Colenso's name occupied a prominent place not only in the religious but

in all the secular newspapers of the day. Even the inventor of conundrums seized upon it: ¹⁶³

Riddle: My first expresses numbers, my second
magnifies numbers, my third negates
numbers and my whole destroys numbers.

Answer: CO - LENS - O

A massive amount of literature attempting to defend the Bible from Colenso's attack was published. Many, such as William Hoare's Letter to Bishop Colenso, were addressed to the English laity and carried on the traditional operations of reconciling the apparent Scriptural contradictions and justifying the passages which were morally questionable. Hoare answered Colenso's objections to Exodus 16:16 on the following grounds: It was false to assume, as Colenso did, that the tents the Israelites had on coming out of Egypt (necessitating 200,000 oxen to carry them) were modern European models. It was more probable that they resembled the tents still found in Syria, consisting of four poles and an awning, and weighing only five pounds. One man could easily have carried ten tents, and each one was capable of protecting ten people. Maintaining a firm traditional stance on the moral goodness of God's revelation, Hoare also defended the instructions of Exodus 21:20 and 21, which had been queried by Colenso's African converts. He urged his readers to remember the state of society in ancient history, and the relative moderation of the mass of Hebrew legislation. This particular law is merciful to the master because of the real possibility that beating could turn into homicide in a tropical climate. Also, the master was punished enough

by the loss of a slave. It is interesting to note that The Christian Remembrancer saw Colenso's work as only one more rationalistic scandal, recommending to combat it the book, A Short and Easy Method with the Deists.¹⁶⁴ It was claimed in Peake's biography that the name most familiar to him in biblical scholarship was that of Colenso. "It was taken for granted however that his views could not be true, and it was assumed that the replies made to him, as to Tom Paine's Age of Reason, were conclusive."¹⁶⁵

The orthodox were, significantly, not the only ones who denounced the work. Stanley, who held moderate if not liberal views, criticized Colenso's negative approach. Hort, the New Testament scholar, believed that the writings of Colenso contained much of permanent value which was outweighed by "the discouragement which the cause of progressive Old Testament criticism in England has sustained through the natural revulsion against the manner in which he has represented it."¹⁶⁶ Maurice described his feelings, on first reading Colenso's book, as shock and horror:

To have a quantity of criticism about the dung in the Jewish camp, and the division of a hare's foot thrown in my face, when I was satisfied that the Jewish history had been the mightiest witness to the people for a living God against the dead dogmas of priests, was more shocking to me than I can describe.¹⁶⁷

There are explanations for why Colenso began what was on the whole a constructive exercise with such a negative approach. As he claimed himself, he was "compelled to do his work so quickly in order that his views might be made

plain, in an open and honest fashion, as soon as possible."¹⁶⁸ From his own personal and missionary experience, he had found that the greatest stumbling block to faith was the literalism of the orthodox. It was an obstacle which he felt had to be removed immediately. In the eyes of the public however he remained little more than an iconoclast and a heretic. The latter, more positive contribution which he made was something of an anticlimax and, on the popular level, was generally disregarded.

The 1860's then, so far as the British public was concerned, had left a largely negative legacy in the area of modern biblical studies. One sympathetic to the higher criticism looked back upon the decade in 1896 with the comment that, "The results of biblical criticism were set before English churchmen in a singularly ill-judged and unfortunate manner. It is hard to imagine anything more mischievous to the true interests of the Church than the controversies raised by the publication of Essays and Reviews and Colenso's work on the Pentateuch and the Book of Joshua..."¹⁶⁹ In the popular mind higher criticism continued to be identified with infidelity and rationalism rampant in earlier decades. And, the antidote was to be the same; numerous publications continued to bolster the divine nature of the Bible with the evidences of miracle and fulfilled prophecy, and continued to show that contradictions on the sacred record simply did not exist. The views of the conventional believer discussed in a previous section were thus upheld and reinforced in

in the latter decades of the nineteenth century.

A rigid and mechanical view of inspiration for example persisted in the face of advancing biblical scholarship. Thomas Scott's preface to his Commentary on the Bible was republished as a pamphlet in 1881. J.W. Burgon went even further than Scott's preface in claiming that, "The Bible cannot be less than verbally inspired. Every syllable is just what it would be had God spoken from heaven, without the intervention of any human agent."¹⁷⁰ Books such as William Emmens' Suggestive Notes for Scripture Reading (1892) taught elaborate schemes based on the numbers of the Bible, to show the basic unity and harmony of the Scriptures.¹⁷¹ William Smith's Student's Scripture History (1865) included chronological charts showing the birth and death dates from Adam to Moses and the overlap between each successive life-span, again "not for curiosity's sake, but to show by how few steps, and yet by how many contemporary teachers, the tradition of primal history had been handed down."¹⁷² Finally, the emphasis on proofs from prophecy and the study of typology increased in these latter decades. Fairbairn's Typology of Scripture passed through a new and fifth edition in 1870. Works such as Elizabeth Ranyard's Bible Portfolio, in which a colored chart encompassed the beginning and end of world history in terms of prophecy, were plentiful. The Portfolio was intended "to give some comprehensive views of history and prophecy, leading to a joyful anticipation of the approaching reign of Christ, and of the eternal glories prepared for all the saints of God".¹⁷³

At the same time as the conventional views on the Bible were daily being reinforced, biblical scholarship in Germany was progressing far beyond that reflected in the work of the essayists and Colenso. In his Historical Books of the Old Testament, the scholar H.K. Graf made the revolutionary claim that P, or the basic Elohist document identified by Hupfeld and containing legislative material, was really the latest source of all. He attributed, first, most of the source, and eventually the entire body of material, to the post-Exilic period. The key ultimately lay in De Wette's dating of Deuteronomy in the reign of Josiah, which brought into focus the origins of the other legislative material. The Grafian hypothesis was particularly significant in moving the Mosaic law to a late date in the history of Israel: no longer would the history be read as an attempt to uphold an ideal system initiated by Moses, but rather a process of gradual growth towards that ideal.

This new interpretation made the history more rational and comprehensible than the confusing sequence of events resulting from the traditional dating. The latter had separated the promulgation of the 'Mosaic Law' from the time of its effective influence on the institutions of the people by a long period in which its prescriptions were comparatively unknown and the existing religious institutions were primitive by comparison. The evolutionary conception proved of great value in ordering and explaining various phenomena of this sort which had puzzled earlier scholars.¹⁷⁴

Most brilliant and prolific of all the exponents of Graf's hypothesis was Julius Wellhausen, whose books on the Composition of the Hexateuch and Prolegomena to the

History of Israel converted large numbers of scholars to the new theory. Already in his studies of the books of Samuel and Kings, Wellhausen had come to see that these historical writings did not presuppose a knowledge of the elaborate priestly laws of the First Elohists, which Wellhausen labelled as Q but which is now universally recognized as P. Thus he was ready to accept the correctness of Graf's conclusion and to provide it with a basis of scholarly evidence which neither Reuss nor Graf had been able to give it.¹⁷⁵ Gaining the reputation of the "Darwin of criticism", Wellhausen confirmed the Grafian theory and erected a detailed history of the cultus, in accord with both literary analysis and Hegelian evolutionism, upon it. Contradicted now were not only the cherished traditions of Mosaic authorship, but the entire traditional concept of Hebrew history and religion.

Radical changes were also being made in the study of the Old Testament prophets. Many scholars and churchmen by the latter decades of the nineteenth century had come to admit the non-Isaianic nature of chapters 40 through 66, but the traditional authorship of much of the first part of the book was also increasingly coming under attack. Conservative scholars doubted the eighth century origin of chapters 24 to 27, 34 to 35 and 13:1 through 14:23. Radical critics such as Duhm and Cheyne went further, granting authenticity to only a relatively small portion of the prophecies in chapters 1 through 39.

Especially with the advent of the Graf-Wellhausen hypothesis therefore the higher criticism was making a tremendous difference to the way in which the Old Testament and the history of Israel were regarded. It was also developing a body of results which scholars and even some devout churchmen were looking upon as "assured". Critical studies were advancing at a rapid pace, commanding the allegiance of a new generation of scholars and clergymen. The public however remained beset with fears of rationalism and infidelity, with no recollection of the conciliatory work done earlier in the century by men such as Coleridge or Maurice. What it would take to make some popular inroads was a clear identification of the critical outlook with evangelical piety; such a gesture of reconciliation was made in the work of four major biblical scholars in the closing decades of the nineteenth century. It is to their work that the last section of this chapter is devoted.

Reconciliation and Reconstruction

William Robertson Smith: A Word in Season

William Robertson Smith, the Scottish orientalist, stands as the forerunner in this process of reconciliation, rooted firmly as he was in the traditions of evangelical piety and advanced biblical scholarship. Not long after the acquittals of Colenso, Williams and Wilson, Smith was producing essays which were to shape the pattern

of "believing criticism" until the First World War. He succeeded, as a teacher of theology, in introducing a generation of Christians to the principles of higher criticism while simultaneously educating them to a new and deeper understanding of the Bible as a divine revelation. He was firmly convinced that "after the critics had wrung from the Bible what they supposed to be confessions about the humility of its origins they in no way detracted from the Bible's power to convey the Word of God".¹⁷⁶

There are three publications in Smith's extensive bibliography which are especially significant in the process of reconciling faith and criticism. The first two were addressed primarily to theological students while the third was given as a series of public lectures subsequently distributed as The Old Testament in the Jewish Church. It was the latter work which appeared on nearly every bibliography commending critical study to laymen and the teachers of religious education. There is evidence that countless churchmen owed to it a faith which could come to terms with the progress of modern scholarship.

Robertson Smith spent the years 1866 to 1870 in theological training at New College, Edinburgh, in preparation for full time service to the church. It was during these years of study, travel and debate that his extreme Presbyterian orthodoxy evolved into a position which could welcome the most progressive forms of higher criticism. Several factors were responsible for a change

of such major proportions: The views of his teacher A.B. Davidson for example introduced Smith to the whole idea of "believing criticism". Davidson criticized those who would deduce from the grammar of the Bible certain pre-established dogmas instead of allowing the Bible, under careful examination, to speak for itself. "The books of Scripture, so far as interpretation and general formal criticism are concerned, must be handled very much as other books are handled."¹⁷⁷ His work, while cautious in its dealings with new and advanced theories, suggested to Smith that the higher criticism was not so alien to the Word of God as he had once supposed.

In April, 1867, following his first year at New College, Smith went to Germany to study theology at the University of Bonn during the summer months. Preferring the more moderate views of Bonn to the radical rationalism of some at Tübingen and Heidelberg, he made important contacts with a group of scholars, including Kamphausen and Richard Röhre, who were attempting to negotiate a viable position between orthodoxy and liberalism. It was as a result of his time at Bonn that Smith began to devote seriously his talents to a reconciliation of the old and new views of the Bible. He was particularly impressed by the sincerity and piety of Kamphausen, and was led to write as much to his father after hearing the critic's lectures:

Though his view leads him to admit that there may be historical errors in the Bible, and to refer Daniel to the period of the Maccabees, etc. he is not a rationalist according to the

Germans, who reserve that name for those who deny supernatural inspiration and prophecy altogether...So far as I can see, he holds quite orthodox views on the person, miracles etc., of Christ, and lays special weight on the testimonium Spiritus Sancti.¹⁷⁸

The decisive influence on Smith however was exercised by Röthe. In his Zur Dogmatik, which Smith earned as a prize in his second year, Rothe expressed his desire to maintain the miraculous and supernatural aspects of Christianity while transforming the traditional way in which they were understood. The effect which Rothe's quest had on Smith was revealed in his essay on "Christianity and the Supernatural", delivered to the Theological Society at New College in January, 1869. In a letter to his family Smith described the paper as "very much a rendering of Rothe's ideas from an English starting point and in English forms of thought."¹⁷⁹ In it Smith established a position which rooted him in the evangelical perspective of Christian faith as a personal relationship to Jesus Christ, and yet which forced him to re-think the conventional understanding of divine revelation and inspiration.

"The essay was a frontal assault on the reigning school of apologetics and a frank denial of the doctrine of an infallible Bible. Coupled with this attack was a constructive attempt to place the Faith on what seemed to Smith a more certain foundation."¹⁸⁰ Smith made several points of significance in the paper. It was, he claimed, no longer possible to defend Christianity as a series of rational propositions, the way the eighteenth century churchmen had attempted to do. The essence of Christianity

was the personal love of the Savior, and on this and this alone did it rest. Thus revelation took on a personal quality: "We can no longer," claimed Smith, "speak of revelation as a revelation of truths. The knowledge given in revelation is not the knowledge of facts but knowledge of a person."¹⁸¹ It was necessary consequently to distinguish between the revelation of God and the Bible as the record of that revelation.

In contrast to the German nationalism which was often associated with broader views of the Bible, Smith made it clear that the idea of the supernatural was indispensable to any such concept of revelation as the self-disclosure of God in a personal relationship. "Our Christian faith that God in Christ Jesus has made Himself personally known to us, has entered into personal relations with us, is then in one word our faith in a supernatural self-manifestation of God; and the apologetic in which we seek to justify our Christian faith must have for its central point this idea of the supernatural."¹⁸² Miracles were not to be seen only as evidence for propositional truths, but as the central facts of the history of redemption by which God continually entered into natural history.

It was this emphasis on the Person of Christ and his miraculous redemptive work which undoubtedly convinced a good number of potential converts that higher criticism need not adversely affect the central truths of Christianity. The process of reconciliation was facilitated further

by Smith's vindication of a historical understanding of the Old Testament based on the best traditions of the church. In his inaugural lecture at Aberdeen in November, 1870 (later published as the pamphlet, "What History Teaches Us to Seek in the Bible"), Smith elaborated upon what he regarded as the defective hermeneutic and unhistorical exegesis of the pre-Reformation church. The post-Apostolic teachers, lacking the deep personal experience of the early Apostles, were unable to sense how the New Testament was rooted in and developed from the Old. Christian truth, they believed, was the substance of the sacred Scriptures, and so they were content to believe that they had understood a passage as soon as they could in any way detect in it a meaning which was related to Christian faith. It thus became traditionally difficult to interpret Scripture rightly, so long as men sought in it what it did not contain - a system of abstract Christian truth which had the power to mould a man's life without any direct personal relation to Christ.

A personal trust in God, in contrast, was the keynote of the Reformation. Calvin, Melancthon and other great men of the Reformation, had been full of the new learning of their times and were not afraid of it. They looked upon it as a great gift from God, and could use it, just because they were deeply religious men, who had a personal hold on the great doctrine of Christian grace. T.M. Lindsay in 1878 described Smith's understanding of church history thus:

They were men who had personal experience of what is called the objective witness of the Holy Spirit, and who felt with regard to Scripture, for example, that they had the very same testimony which accompanied the Scripture when first uttered...And thus while the Holy Scripture was received by them as a book of instruction and information, it was a great deal more. It was a means of entrance into that same life of communion with God which the Almighty had vouchsafed in times past to His believing people...Calvin and his fellows could afford to permit a rearrangement of Scriptural details, and could appeal freely to such historical criticism as was at their command to help them in their work. Historical criticism, in fact, if only the doctrine of the witness of the Spirit be kept clearly in the foreground, resolves the Bible into scene after scene of fellowship and communion with God.¹⁸³

Smith, as an heir of the Reformation theologians and an upholder of the Church's confessional theology, laid emphasis upon this doctrine of the witness of the Spirit. In his work, Lindsay continued, the principles of historical criticism were employed to furnish new evidence of the continuous intercourse of Jehovah with His chosen people. God for example did not simply give to Israel a set of laws and then leave his people, unaided, to apply the code. Rather, the details of legislation were continually modified by a series of divinely commissioned prophets, who from time to time appeared to guide the people. Smith himself concluded on his Reformation heritage:

We, too, if we are really earnest with our study of the Bible, if we desire to deal truly with Scripture and our Protestant freedom, must regulate all our exegesis and our criticism by the great principle that we are to seek in the Bible, not a body of

abstract religious truth, but the living personal history of God's gracious dealings with men from age to age, till at length in Christ's historical work the face of the eternal is fully revealed, and we by faith can enter into the fullest and freest fellowship with an Incarnate God.¹⁸⁴

Throughout Robertson Smith's early academic career he expressed doubts about his ability to communicate his ideas to fellow students and churchmen. To his father he confided, "I do not think I can ever be a popular speaker...I never rise except to expound one idea, and am, therefore too theoretical to be very well received."¹⁸⁵ By the time he took the Hebrew chair at Aberdeen however he appears to have overcome these difficulties.¹⁸⁶ He kept a constant stream of preaching and lecture engagements, the most popular of which were given in 1881 in Edinburgh and Glasgow to combined audiences averaging eighteen hundred on each occasion. The lectures were printed as The Old Testament in the Jewish Church. Of the series Smith wrote, "I have striven to make my exposition essentially popular in the legitimate sense of the word - that is, to present a continuous argument, resting at every point on valid historical evidence, and so framed that it can be followed by the ordinary English reader who is familiar with the Bible and accustomed to consecutive thought."¹⁸⁷ The lectures were one of the earliest attempts to popularize the methods and conclusions of an advanced school of higher criticism. It is evident however, from the first exposition, that they were to be linked solely with Reformation exegesis and

evangelical piety. The true critic, claimed Smith, sets his task to build up and not to destroy. He attempts to trace the steps by which an ancient book has been transmitted to us, to find out where it came from and who wrote it, to examine the occasion of its composition, and to look for its connections with the ancient world and the personal circumstances of the author. "This is exactly what Protestant principles direct us to do with the several parts of the Bible."¹⁸⁸ Smith was convinced that such an enterprise could only strengthen faith:

Those who love the truth will not shrink from any toil that can help us to a fuller insight into all its details and all its setting; and those whose faith is firmly fixed on the things that cannot be moved will not doubt that every new advance in biblical study must in the end make God's great scheme of grace appear in fuller beauty and glory.¹⁸⁹

His concern for caution and for upholding the central truths of Christianity brought criticism upon Smith which was not entirely unfounded. He never abandoned his convictions on the unique nature and value of the Bible while pursuing an increasingly radical criticism which had reduced most of the text to a series of "composites". It was a matter which troubled his more liberal opponents but not the general public.¹⁹⁰ What contradictions and difficulties there were in his system of "believing criticism" were propagated in countless popular publications which owed their inspiration to the Scottish scholar. Churchmen heard from Smith's sermons, even in the days of his trials, a confident message with a strong flavor of old-fashioned evangelicalism; they saw exemplified in

his life the ideals of Christian humility, thankfulness and patience. Here was a man steeped in German scholarship who could reconcile the new thinking with faith. It was an encouragement to many who sought some new way for themselves, their congregations and their pupils.

Samuel Rolles Driver: Teaching the Faithful Criticism and the Critics Faith

Samuel Rolles Driver, the Hebraist and critical scholar, died in 1914, the year I have chosen to terminate this discussion. It is perhaps Driver more than any other single scholar who is constantly pointed to as the guiding light in the process of reconciliation and popularization. His numerous works spanned a critical period of modification and readjustment, and emphasized the belief that a frank examination of the Old Testament along scientific lines helped rather than hindered its acceptance as the record of divine revelation.¹⁹¹ His work of reconciliation was praised by many scholars in evaluating his achievements:

We recognise the good providence of God in giving us such a scholar, placed in a position of leadership, to educate opinion and keep it on right lines at a critical period of transition. He has saved us from extravagances on the one hand, and from dangerous unsettlement on the other. He has convinced his contemporaries of the reasonableness of the newer methods of study and interpretation.¹⁹²

Driver succeeded Pusey as regius professor of Hebrew at Christ Church, Oxford in 1882, and remained there until his death. Pusey's time and work at Oxford had been

of special significance so far as Driver was concerned. By the role he played in establishing university scholarships for Hebrew, Pusey secured a succession of students aiming at an exact and comprehensive study of the language. It was this group of scholars who formed first the main and then an important part of the classes to which Driver lectured.¹⁹³ Pusey's work, especially that on Daniel, also provided a background of contrast against which Driver worked, defending as it did the traditional view of the Scriptures. Pusey was a scholar of the old school whereas Driver was one of the new; by the time the latter took up residence at Oxford a new set of problems had become insistent and required a response.¹⁹⁴

Critical biblical studies were developing in a remarkable way during the later years of Pusey's life and Driver's early days at Oxford. The Robertson Smith controversy had reawakened turmoil over the means and ends of the critical enterprise. Through various translations, German scholarship was rapidly making advances in the realm of theological studies. Ewald's History of Israel and his Prophets had been translated along with Kuenen's Religion of Israel and Wellhausen's Prolegomena. Stanley had popularized Ewald in his Lectures on the Jewish Church and Robertson Smith had made a wider public acquainted with the results of German criticism in The Old Testament in the Jewish Church as well as his Encyclopedia Britannica articles. It is not surprising therefore that an atmosphere of agitation pervaded theological studies in the

early 1880's; educated opinion debated the conclusions of the critics and was concerned over where, in terms of the Christian faith, such conclusions led. Driver more than anyone else came to be trusted as a guide through the period of transition: "he taught the faithful criticism and the critics faith".¹⁹⁵

It must be said in the first instance that the faithful to whom Driver taught criticism were largely those who frequented academic circles and who followed movements in scholarship. His early and most original work in linguistics had a scholarly if not widespread appeal. Even his Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament was anything but popular in form: "It presented an immense mass of details and of arguments often intricate; and though these were arranged with all possible clearness, the book, if it was to be understood, demanded close and careful reading..."¹⁹⁶ Yet by the close of the nineteenth century, the book had been extensively circulated and continued to be "a mine from which many writers have quarried".¹⁹⁷

In addition, Driver wrote a number of more consciously popular works which appeared at the end of the 1890's and during the first decade of the twentieth century. He constantly kept before him the aim of popularizing the results of biblical scholarship through the pulpit and newspapers as well as through his writings. His Parallel Psalter showed how concerned he was to bring the best biblical scholarship within the reach of the ordinary Christian reader. In the preface Driver claimed: "It

occurred to me that there might be some who, not having the time or the inclination to study elaborate commentaries, might nevertheless be glad to have a trustworthy version of the Psalms, which could readily be compared with the Prayer Book Psalter, and with the help of which they could ascertain and correct for themselves the deficiencies of the latter."¹⁹⁸ The aim of his Book of the Prophet Jeremiah likewise was "to assist an ordinary educated reader to read the Book of Jeremiah intelligently".¹⁹⁹

There is a great deal of evidence to suggest that Driver succeeded in commending the higher criticism to the general public, and in assisting theological students in their approach to the new and rapidly expanding discipline. His works, particularly his Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament, and his joint work with A.F. Kirkpatrick on The Higher Criticism were depended upon and recommended by almost every book written for laymen and teachers on biblical criticism. Upon his death The Contemporary Review wrote that it was necessary to look beyond the scope of the Anglican communion to the non-conforming churches of England, the Presbyterian churches of Scotland and the churches of America to fully assess the impact of Driver's work: "Then it will be safe to assert that the name of no theologian of our own time was better, if so well, known, and that no other influence extended more widely or had struck deeper than his."²⁰⁰ We may ask why Driver exerted such a strong and widespread influence. He was certainly not a pioneer

in the field of biblical studies, and so could not depend on novelty or originality for his popularity. Rather, his work became widely known on the grounds of style and presentation, but also, more significantly, because of the security which Driver fostered in his readers. Driver assured believers that,

Criticism in the hands of Christian scholars does not banish or destroy the inspiration of the Old Testament; it presupposes it; it seeks only to determine the conditions under which it operates, and the literary forms through which it manifests itself; and it thus helps us to frame truer conceptions of the methods in which it has pleased God to employ in revealing Himself to His ancient people of Israel and in preparing the way for the fuller manifestation of Himself in Christ Jesus.²⁰¹

Here was a scholar who, on the basis of careful textual study could "sift the wheat from the chaff" and come up with dependable critical results which enhanced and not destroyed the Bible as the divine revelation of God.

Undoubtedly attractive to English readers was the objective character and style of Driver's critical work. He practiced an inductive method of biblical study, basing his conclusions on a vast number of particulars and giving references for each one. "His positions were supported by hard facts and black and white reasons, admirably marshalled, lucidly expressed, judicially stated. With subjective, incommunicable expressions he had little to do; he always turned by instinctive preference to arguments that would appeal to the common sense of the average cultivated reader."²⁰² He also had a great ability for making the biblical text understood, by

accurate and clear thinking, in all its finer shades of meaning:

By his remarkable lucidity, exactness, powers of judgment, and sense of proportion, he has shown a wonderful gift for bringing home the results of the best science in a form in which they can be assimilated by the whole army of students and scholars from the greatest down to the least, and so making them ultimately accessible to the mass of people.²⁰³

More important however was the reputation Driver gained as a careful and sober judge of critical conclusions who, because of his extensive knowledge of the Hebrew text, could be trusted as a guide through a maze of theories. Driver's life has been described as one of systematic preparation and progress.²⁰⁴ He was a great biblical critic because he was first a great Hebrew scholar, and he would not have been so great a Hebraist if he had not been a fine classical scholar. His work on Hebrew Tenses, published in 1874, won for Driver a secure position among the foremost authorities on Hebrew grammar, and remained as Driver's most "original and enduring piece of work". In his next important work, the Notes on the Hebrew Text of the Book of Samuel, his reputation as a textual critic of high stature was further enhanced. It was only after Driver had laid a solid foundation of linguistic study did he feel capable of taking up the higher criticism. He was a grammarian first, critic and commentator second, and it was this order that he always insisted upon. In his own writing, especially in the Introduction, as well as constantly in his teaching Driver aimed at securing firm, objective

foundations. He made his audiences aware that, "Accurate scholarship must be made the starting point of all else; a great deal of patient drudgery with grammar, lexicon, and concordance must go to the making of a sound interpreter of the higher sense of the sacred texts."²⁰⁵ His emphasis upon philological foundations resembled that of Lightfoot's, and thus had a peculiar attraction for English students.²⁰⁶ Criticism of the Old Testament based upon a first-hand knowledge of Hebrew had much commending its acceptance as sound and authoritative.

Driver's mental habits as a grammarian determined his method as a critic and earned for him popular acclaim as a sober and fair-minded judge of what could be accepted as the "assured results" of higher criticism. Perhaps more important than any other factor responsible for his influence was Driver's carefulness and caution in stating conclusions. In the preface to his Introduction he stated that, "Upon no occasion have I adopted what may be termed a critical as opposed to conservative position, without weighing fully the arguments advanced in support of the latter, and satisfying myself that they were untenable."²⁰⁷ "We may be sure," declared Rev. G.A. Cooke, "that he does not speak until he has carefully weighed every point and given it its full value."²⁰⁸ Once the objective evidence had been assessed, the conclusions were arranged on a graduated scale according to varying degrees of probability.²⁰⁹ Where the evidence was meager or indecisive, the question was willingly left open; there was no attempt to press evidence unduly against traditional

opinions.²¹⁰ Familiar to Driver's pupils was the remark, "The data are not sufficient to warrant us in forming any certain conclusions."²¹¹ At the same time, when Driver was convinced that the evidence was decisive, he expressed himself in no uncertain way, free from theological considerations.

The fact that Driver accepted certain critical conclusions had been made clear as early as 1882 in his article on "Some Alleged Linguistic Difficulties of the Elohist". The stance was confirmed with reference to the Pentateuch in his Critical Notes on the International Sunday School Lessons for 1887 and his little work on Isaiah in the Men of the Bible series. But it was not until the publication, in 1891, of his famous Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament that his critical position on Old Testament problems was clearly defined. The volume was an "instant and remarkable" success, owing not to its novelty but to its careful scholarship and moderation,²¹² New editions rapidly followed each other: the sixth was published six years later, the seventh in 1898 and the eighth in 1909. Driver did not accept the Graf-Wellhausen theory until he had studied the evidence for himself, but between 1882 and 1889, he became convinced of its validity, and in the Introduction surveyed the biblical literature from this point of view. Driver made it clear that he rejected certain critical conclusions in favor of more orthodox ones because he saw insufficient data for accepting them, a position which

earned him considerable criticism from the English scholar T.K. Cheyne. Cheyne lamented Driver's "retrograde step" in assigning Isaiah 40-66 to a single author, and in allowing for a date as early as 300 B.C. for the writing of Daniel. Yet as a mediator of the new criticism, Driver found his moderation welcomed. "To ardent spirits, Driver's caution and moderation seemed disappointing; in general, however, the book was welcomed as authoritative, and it was singularly well-timed."²¹³

Finally, Driver was able to reconcile many students and churchmen to biblical criticism because of the reverent tone of his works. Driver taught the critics faith by showing that the critical views, far from destroying the religious value of the sacred books, gave them fresh significance and permanent worth. There was nothing inconsistent in holding to an inspired Bible, even if one accepted composite authorship. In his Sermons on Subjects Connected with the Old Testament he set out what he believed was an idea of inspiration based on the books of the Bible themselves:

It is an influence which gave to those who received it a unique and extraordinary spiritual insight, enabling them thereby, without superseding or suppressing the human faculties...to declare in different degrees, and in accordance with the needs or circumstances of particular ages or particular occasions, the mind and purpose of God.²¹⁴

While Driver was quick to admit the human role, he made it quite clear that inspiration was more than just illumination.

He also considered the bearing which criticism had on

the validity of the New Testament narratives. In his lectures on The Higher Criticism Driver assured believers that because of the very different conditions under which the New Testament was produced, and especially because of the relatively short time between Jesus' life on earth and the writing of the material, critical study posed no threat to faith. It was true of course that the sayings of Jesus had often been recast in order to suit the author's own style.²¹⁵ It was, however, impossible to conceive that the application of the principles of higher criticism to the New Testament, "though it may alter our view of the origin and structure of some of the documents concerned, should ever affect appreciably the historical evidence for all the leading facts of our Lord's life, or for the vital truths of Christianity."²¹⁶ Peake, himself greatly influenced by Driver, concluded: "Driver's conservative and judicial mind enabled him to do a work that could perhaps have been done by no other, and that it was largely through his labours that what is known as the critical view of the Old Testament became so widely accepted among English scholars."²¹⁷

George Adam Smith: An Interpreter, One Among a Thousand

George Adam Smith, Old Testament scholar and principal of Aberdeen University, gained considerable popularity at the end of the nineteenth century as a preacher and expositor of the Bible. This recognition in and of itself was not unusual, but what set Smith's work apart was his

firm adherence to an advanced scientific view of the Scriptures which he brought to his writing, his lecturing and his preaching. The higher critics had, at least in a general way, settled matters among themselves as to the composition of the Old Testament; these results then had to be commended to the public at large. It was to this challenge that Smith directed his efforts, stressing to his audiences the constructive and positive effects which higher criticism had on the Old Testament as the resource book of the preacher.

After graduating from the University of Edinburgh in 1875, Smith entered New College for his divinity course, there coming under the influence of the Old Testament theologian A.B. Davidson. Summer semesters were spent in Germany studying theology under Delitzsch and Harnack. During his theological education therefore Smith became clearly aware of the new critical approach to the Bible. He followed with keen interest the progress of the trial of Robertson Smith, and as a result set himself "to reconcile the outlook of an advanced scientific scholar with the spirit of devout reverence."²¹⁸ It has been claimed in fact that the synthesis of faith and reason which Robertson Smith had hoped to complete was accomplished by George Adam Smith himself in the first of his expository writings on Isaiah.²¹⁹

In 1882 Smith was ordained by the Presbytery of Aberdeen to the charge of Queen's Cross Free Church. It was during his ten years at Aberdeen that Smith developed

his skills as a preacher and interpreter of the Bible, always with the conclusions of the higher critics in mind. It was in this way that he came to influence a great many churchmen:

For all those who enjoyed hearing the deep truths of the Old Testament expounded in vivid and realistic fashion, he had few, if any, equal to him...To his qualifications as a scholar Smith added others that were peculiarly his own - his keen sense of literary values, his deep insight into personality, and, above all, his remarkable gift for applying the ancient Scriptures to our modern minds.²²⁰

One result of his teaching ministry was a series of lecture-sermons given at Aberdeen and later published between 1888 and 1892 as a two-volume work on the Book of Isaiah. "This book, with his work on the Holy Land, represents perhaps his finest literary achievements."²²¹ The British Weekly claimed that Smith, in the second part of the work covering Isaiah 40 to 66, had "done more than all his teachers" to make the scientific study of the Old Testament popular and trusted."²²²

The warm reception which the book received in many quarters of the Church was not due to any critical timidity on the part of the author. Driver may have appeared cautious in accepting the conclusions of the advanced critics, but Smith was applauded by T.K. Cheyne in the Expositor for refusing to compromise his views in order to cajole the conservatives. Smith did not treat the section of later prophecies as a unity, no doubt raising a fear of "unbridled disintegration" in many minds. Cheyne admitted that, "It has required the

author's utmost skill to make his view plausible to ordinary readers; but his effort appears to have succeeded."²²³ There are other possible reasons for the popularity of Isaiah. The theology advocated in the work, in both parts, was thoroughly evangelical in its character. True religion for Smith was based not on books or tradition but upon a personal experience of God as revealed in Christ. Here was no sterile dissection of a sacred book, but a method of approaching the Scriptures which could be of great service to the evangelical faith. The volumes on Isaiah presented the results of scientific study "not as the bare and wintry stem, which too often repels, but rich and attractive with the foliage and fruit which sound criticism yields".²²⁴ The author not only displayed a great facility for dramatic presentation and for the "magical English style", but he also emphasized the way in which the message of the prophets could be applied to modern life. Later in his life Smith recalled this rediscovery of the Old Testament in his life and work:

The fresh paths through the Hebrew Scriptures which had been opened by Graf and Ewald, by A.B. Davidson, Driver, Cheyne and Robertson Smith, were eagerly followed by us younger men and always with spiritual gain. In particular the Prophets came to their own with us. Their patriotism and its conflict in their hearts with higher ideals,...the relevance of their civic ethics to our own social problems and dangers, their freedom from tradition, dogma and ritual, because of their faith in a living God and the vision of his ceaseless working in history, both past and present - all this was absorbing, inspiring and of intense practical value.²²⁵

In 1892 Smith was elected professor of Old Testament language, literature and theology at the Free Church College, Glasgow, a position which he held until 1909 when he was appointed principal of Aberdeen University. His inaugural lecture on The Preaching of the Old Testament to the Age and his lectures on Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the Old Testament, delivered at Yale University in 1899, expressed ideas which were to be highly influential in carrying the higher criticism from classroom to pulpit and pew. There was at this time clearly a need for guidelines when it came to dealing with historical and literary criticism from the pulpit. The Old Testament could not be ignored in teaching and preaching, claimed The Guardian: "What we desire is that the clergy should first study it more for themselves, and then make up their minds clearly what line they are going to take about it, instead of suffering the difficulties which surround the subject to lead them to take refuge in silence."²²⁶ Smith's works, consequently, became popular as an attempt to deal with the question of whether there was anything in Old Testament criticism to weaken the power of preaching.

To at least some of the popular periodicals, Smith's work came across as "profoundly and unreservedly Christian, rich in calming truth and in earnest and simple faith".²²⁷ Believers were told that they "need not fear any rude, rationalistic assault upon their faith, nor any subtle undermining of their trust in Jesus Christ as their Redeemer and Lord".²²⁸ In his inaugural address Smith

stressed that many critics still affirmed the main Christian truths such as the sovereign grace of God to sinful men, the divinity of Jesus and his atoning death and resurrection.²²⁹ The task of criticism was in fact portrayed not as destructive but encouraging to faith and the salvation of men: "If I am right, then we shall find in the task on which we have entered...interests and responsibilities which are not merely scholastic or historical, but thoroughly evangelical - concerned with faith, and the assistance of souls in darkness, and the equipment of the Church of Christ for her ministry of God's Word."²³⁰

One way in which modern criticism showed itself to be an ally of faith was in its verification of the Bible as the divine revelation of God. Smith contended that this proof was a firmer foundation than that on which the older apologetic used to rely. Criticism had shown that Israel in her early days did not differ from her neighbors intellectually or politically but morally. The moral attributes of God, Smith claimed, had been made known to his people from the beginning: Israel was receiving even through her national deity impressions of the mind and character of God which were eventually developed further by the prophets and seen supremely in Christ.

Believers were also confronted with the suggestion that while Jesus was the chief authority for the worth of the Old Testament, he was also one of its most outspoken critics. Jesus and the Apostles, claimed Smith in his first lecture, had nowhere bound the Church either to obedience to all

the laws of the Old Testament or to belief in all its teachings. Jesus used his powers of discrimination in dealing with the Jewish law, not just spiritualizing certain parts but actually condemning them. He had in his teaching suggested the idea of the development of revelation from a primitive state and had reminded his followers of the conflict between the Law and the Prophets, both ideas being central to the conclusions of the modern critics. Smith concluded, "The New Testament treatment of the Old...not only delivers us once and for all from bondage to the doctrine of literal inspiration and equal divinity of all parts of the Old Testament, but prompts every line of research and discussion along which the modern criticism of the Old Testament has been conducted."²³¹

After making it plain that the critical enterprise is a legitimate and indeed obligatory exercise in which the Christian should be engaged, Smith turned his attention towards the effect which the scientific study of the Bible had on the work of the preacher. It was imperative for Smith that the critical study of the Bible be conducted in the library and classroom and not in the pulpit. "I always warn my students of that. They must not come into the pulpit reeking with criticism: a child that smells soapy is not clean. The pulpit is to preach the Gospel, not for criticism."²³² Nevertheless Smith believed that the higher criticism had made tremendous changes, for the better, in the way biblical material was selected

and developed in sermon preparation. In Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the Old Testament, he dealt particularly with the historical narratives and the prophets in terms of preaching in the light of modern scholarship.

A panic of sorts had developed among preachers who believed that doubt had been cast on much of the historical material in the Bible, making it difficult to preach in a positive and affirming way from the Old Testament. Even considering the opinions of the most extreme critics however Smith claimed that only a small portion of the Bible had been questioned. Ministers could consult a number of commentaries to find which material was most reliable, and they would there see that critical investigation had corroborated the stories of Elisha, Elijah, Gideon, the life of David and the greater part of the books of Samuel and Kings. One of the most difficult parts of the Old Testament so far as historicity was concerned was of course the Book of Genesis. Smith clearly stated that while Genesis 1 to 11 could not be recognized as anything more than myth and legend, the ethical and spiritual value of the chapters for the preacher was beyond question. The later chapters of the book confronted the preacher with the problem of the patriarchs. While it made more sense to see these stories as accounts of tribes rather than individuals, there was a tendency among critics to admit at least a kernel or substratum of personal history in the records. It was impossible to say more, yet this should be enough for the preacher.

So far as preachers and teachers were concerned however there was "no part of the Old Testament upon which Modern Criticism has been constructive as within the prophetic writings".²³³ In attempting to persuade his readers to accept this point of view, Smith pointed to a definite revival in the use of the prophets in preaching. Prophecy had in the past been used basically to illustrate dogma and to prove the divinity of Christ or the inspiration of the Bible. A new emphasis however on the historical context of the prophets had resulted in a vibrant form of preaching directly related to the social and civic problems of the day. Smith pointed to the work of A.P. Stanley, A.B. Davidson and Robertson Smith as being particularly influential on students and ministers in this respect. He also cited F.W. Farrar in refuting the idea that the acceptance of Old Testament criticism ruled out effective preaching: "Dr. Farrar accepts the legitimacy of critical methods, he accepts not a few of their results; yet his preaching has always been warmly ethical and directly applied to the social problems and vices of our own day."²³⁴

It was this particular tendency of Farrar and others to stress the modern application of the prophetic message that Smith developed for his audiences. He observed that while the New Testament Christians were urged to revere the powers that be, and that religion was not associated in the first century A.D. with the popular political struggles nor the responsibilities of government, the state of affairs at the time of the prophets was much more

like that in which modern man found himself. The Apostles were sojourners and pilgrims; the prophets were citizens and statesmen.²³⁵ The latter proclaimed a message which could be applied to any nation and which provided a rich source of material for the modern preacher. The religion of the prophets recognized the hand of God in a nation's history and emphasized that nation's mission to the world in terms of moral progress and sympathy with the weak and oppressed. The strong character and deep sense of justice of the prophets were attributes with which the ordinary nineteenth century Christian could identify.

The attitude of the prophets towards miracles also was also one which Smith saw as appealing to the ordinary believer of his time. Divine works of wonder were virtually absent, with the exception of the sign offered to Ahaz by Isaiah, from the prophetic books. It was not that miracles were disbelieved, but rather that they were not used to validate the prophetic work. The test of the divine origin of a prophet's message was its character. Did it reveal the will of God? Was it in accord with God's revelation in history? The prophetic message was drawn from careful observation of the past and current events of history. "And it is this," declared Smith,

their instinct and conviction of seeing the Divine in process rather than interruption, in law rather than in 'miracle', in method rather than in catastrophe, which makes them appear so modern and undoubtedly engages them for the intellectual as well as the moral sympathies of the day.²³⁶

Finally, Smith urged preachers not to ignore but to express in a new way the spirit of Christ in the Old Testament. Again a blow was struck for "believing criticism". The preachers of the critical era no longer had to be preoccupied with finding some prediction or type of Christ in the Old Testament, a task which rendered many sermons "artificial and unreal".²³⁷ The presence of Christ in the history of Israel was more truly sought upon ethical and historical lines. From the earliest times to the era of the prophets, divine forgiveness and grace along with the call to repentance had been illustrated in the story of Israel. These themes figured most prominently in prophets such as Isaiah and Jeremiah, and it was on such figures rather than, for example, the Old Testament system of sacrifices, that preachers were to concentrate. Smith, curiously enough, defended the idea of typology, meaning by it the fact that there was an essential resemblance between the Old Testament and the New as regards both institutions and their functions, and certain outstanding figures.²³⁸ This was not to say that the old typology problem was not dead and buried, but rather to make it clear to believers that criticism still had to deal with a fundamental relationship between customs, beliefs and lower and higher stages of religious development.²³⁹

Smith's own life-style reflected the immediacy of the prophetic message. He never relaxed his efforts to improve the social conditions of the needy. He championed

the cause of the oppressed and ill-paid women workers in his leadership of the Scottish Council for Women's Trades. He campaigned against sweated labor and served as the Presbytery Convener of the Committee on Unemployment during his time in Glasgow. He was concerned always with relating the eternal truths of the Bible to present day conditions. The characters and events of the Bible had to live again in word and deed, and the results of the higher criticism were indispensable in bringing this about.

Arthur Samuel Peake: Higher Critic and Sincere Evangelist

Arthur Samuel Peake, the last figure in this quartet of popularizers and mediators, did the bulk of his writing and lecturing in what we might designate as the second stage or phase in the development of higher criticism in Britain. By the time Peake graduated from Oxford in 1887, the crisis over criticism, begun in the 1860's, had largely passed, and an increasing number of biblical scholars and church leaders were accepting the main conclusions of historical and literary study. Peake himself gave Driver most of the credit for effecting a peaceful transformation, and it was the Oxford scholar along with Sanday, Cheyne, Farrar and Fairbairn who shaped Peake's own thinking on the new criticism. Peake was aware however that a gulf remained between the criticism of the classroom and the beliefs of the mass of lay folk and less "advanced" ministers.²⁴⁰ An essay on Peake described him as feeling "called to the task of popularisation".

"He did not disdain the function of the middle man. Whilst capable of work of the severest scientific method and value, and able to keep abreast of technical investigations, he nevertheless laid upon himself the duty of mediating the findings of modern biblical research in readable and interesting form."²⁴¹

Early in his life Peake gained a valuable if scant knowledge of problems posed by the biblical records through volumes of the Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges, lent to him by a Sunday school teacher. Insights into critical principles gained in a classics course at Oxford were soon amplified by Farrar's Bampton Lectures in 1885. From Cheyne, Driver, Sanday and especially Fairbairn, Peake learned to apply the historical method to the literature of the Bible. While Peake stated all opinions on a critical problem with boldness and lucidity, he tended to be cautious in his own conclusions. In his work on Lamentations in the Century Bible he set aside the traditional viewpoint and discerned four writers, only one being dated as far back as the Exile and the others dated much later. Yet he admitted that the arguments for a date before the Exile were not without force. Likewise in his commentary on Jeremiah, Peake determined to allow nothing to be taken from the prophet to which he had any reasonable claim. He nevertheless championed a method of interpreting the Bible which was based firmly on the "assured results" of biblical criticism.

Peake's work as a biblical interpreter from a critical viewpoint bore fruit first in the ministerial training

of a new generation of students. In Hartley College, where his major work was done, he built up a curriculum which included six distinct Bible courses, three on the Old and three on the New Testament. As a teacher who fully and fairly expounded the views of others and who encouraged the independent intellectual development of his pupils, Peake exercised a powerful influence over the future ministers of the Free Churches for nearly forty years. Yet he took to heart Harnack's warning that, "The theologians of every country only half discharge their duties if they think it enough to treat the Gospel in the recondite language of learning, and bury it in scholarly folios."²⁴² Peake felt that he had a special vocation to popularize the historical study of the Bible, and so welcomed every opportunity to speak and write on his favorite themes.

It was to alleviate a particular difficulty of the laity and less advanced clergy that Peake designed his popular works. The existence of higher criticism had become widely known, and it was feared that its application to the sacred text would have grave implications for the Bible and the Christian faith. The public at large knew enough to be distressed and yet had far too little knowledge to weigh the critical conclusions and view them as helpful to the understanding of the Bible. There was also the ever-present danger that a new form of obscurantism would sweep the uninformed laity. Peake stepped in as a defender of both criticism and evangelicalism to allay

the fears of the faithful. His works were regarded as meeting a current and urgent need. Of his work on The Bible: Its origin, its significance and its abiding worth one scholar wrote: "I have read your volume and am greatly impressed by its timeliness. I can't imagine any treatment of the subject better fitted to meet the vague feeling, so widely current, that the Bible has been quite discarded by modern investigation." S.R. Driver claimed, "Critics have been suffering lately a great deal from misconception and misrepresentation: and your chapters ought to do a great deal to place criticism in its true light..."²⁴³ Peake's apologetic work, Christianity: Its nature and truth, likewise was acclaimed as meeting a popular need. The Manchester Guardian wrote that the book was the kind of writing required in view of the existing situation. Peake was sensitive to the difficulties, and wrote in order to reassure believers who were disturbed by the probing of rationalist philosophy and scientific criticism. The book was "a rally-point for the faithful and a beacon to the wavering".²⁴⁴

Peake declared more than once that he had no interest in the higher criticism for its own sake, but continually affirmed that the ultimate purpose of such studies was the discovery of the permanent message of the Bible.²⁴⁵ He was above all an interpreter of the Bible, but an interpreter who appreciated and used historical principles. For Peake the scholar was

a debtor to his own age and especially to his fellow-Christians, and it falls within

the sphere of that duty to make the Scriptures more helpful to them as a means of grace. In doing so he will recognise the value of the results he has reached in his scientific investigations. But he will keep steadily in view that his chief purpose is to deepen and expand the religious life of his readers.²⁴⁶

Peake's works consequently popularized the modern view of the nature of the Bible as well as the contents of the Bible, and then sought to apply these principles in order to discern the underlying truth of the biblical message.

One of Peake's most popular works dealing with the nature of the Bible was his earliest publication, the Guide to Biblical Study. The book was an attempt to provide the means with which the student, carefully reading the Bible, might intelligently and personally work out his own conclusions.²⁴⁷ Among other things the book laid down some basic principles of exegesis. Allegorical interpretation was ruled out as leaving the Bible at the mercy of every fad and caprice of the exegete. Peake also urged that the interpreter start with the principle that the prophet's main interest was with his own time; only then did the prophetic material become intelligible. A chapter on "Books" provided readers with a skillfully prepared bibliography as a guide to further study. As The Primitive Methodist Quarterly Review claimed, the book was "a handbook in a very true sense: a light to show the way to be taken, a key to open doors into treasure houses, a quickener to patient and prolonged reading".²⁴⁸

Peake regarded criticism as the instrument for opening up the truth of the Scriptures by discovering their original meaning. He applied his critical knowledge to this end clearly and successfully in the most widely read of all his books, The Problem of Suffering in the Old Testament. Published in 1903 for mass consumption, the work showed that the historical approach could be a fruitful and constructive one. Peake began by pointing out that in the earliest history of Israel, the sufferings of the people were traced to the wrath of God because of disobedience. Yet as time passed, conditions changed. The national conscience was aroused by the reforms of Josiah and hearts turned towards God in the despair of the Exile. Perplexity and heart-break resulted, as seen in some of the Psalms, when the people appeared to be forsaken by God. To the Servant of Jahweh in Second Isaiah is given a partial key to the problem: here is the first hint that suffering may be vicarious and hence redemptive and regenerative in its influence. The poem of Job carries this thought further in terms of the individual. Yet while the Old Testament went far towards some understanding of the problem, it did not provide a solution. For Peake this came only in the mystery of the Cross, the symbol of God's unfailing love.

It is certain that Peake's loyalty to evangelical Christianity convinced a significant number of dubious believers that the higher criticism was nothing to be feared. One of Peake's former pupils claimed that, "He was

trusted because of his genuine piety. Suspicion dissolved before his passionate devotion to Christ. To Peake it was given to save his church from a crude obscurantism and to show how men were led to view wider horizons."²⁴⁹ Peake's evangelical stance was reflected in his theology as well as in his personal demeanor. And, like George Adam Smith, he stressed the usefulness of scholarship in winning lost and perplexed souls for the Gospel. Evangelism, he believed, was all the better if the emotional appeal could have an intellectual basis; many would be lost to the Kingdom if reason and truth were in any way discounted.²⁵⁰

Doctrinal statements based on historical facts were at the heart of Peake's religion. He did not agree with those who advocated a creedless position, nor did he lay greater emphasis on the subjective element of personal experience in the matter of God's revelation to men, at the expense of historical revelation. Instead, equal stress was laid both on history and experience in the process of revelation. This was no doubt an aspect of Peake's thinking which was attractive to many who feared for the main events of the faith in the light of criticism.²⁵¹ In an attempt to expound upon some of the truths of Christianity in a popular and non-technical way, Peake produced his theological manifesto first in a series of articles, and finally in the book Christianity: Its nature and its truth. The attitude adopted was that of an "orthodox but enlightened evangelicalism".²⁵²

Peake firmly accepted the Virgin Birth and the Resurrection not because they were essential to Christianity but because the historical evidence was so strongly in favor of their credibility. At the same time however Peake deviated from the traditional interpretation of certain doctrines. The Incarnation had its ultimate foundation for example in the consciousness of Jesus and not in any peculiar metaphysical relationship.

8 It is likely that Peake also met with favor among his more traditional brethren because of his essentially conservative attitude towards the New Testament as compared with that towards the Old. He accepted for example the two-document hypothesis in his analysis of the Synoptics as well as the Pauline authorship of all of the Pauline Epistles with the possible exception of Ephesians. He also believed that John of Ephesus was the Son of Zebedee and the Beloved Disciple, and the author, either directly or indirectly, of the Fourth Gospel.²⁵³

Finally, Peake's own character was influential in determining the attitude of many churchmen towards the higher criticism. In an introductory note to Peake's biography, the Archbishop of York wrote, "The better one knew him, the more one appreciated his simple and untroubled faith, his devotion to our Lord, his almost embarrassing humility. He was a great scholar who exerted a profound influence upon biblical study and religious thought in England;...but above all, he was a true Christian man."²⁵⁴ His interest in people and his blameless life-style refuted the popular fear that the higher criticism

bred skepticism and degeneracy. Peake was not of the test to which his believing criticism was constantly being subjected, and he accepted it as part of his duty as a popularizer. A long-time friend of Peake's reminisced on this point:

Many years after (about 1920) when I was passing through Manchester, and spent an afternoon with him, I asked him whether he still went to the theater. 'No,' he said, 'I have had to sacrifice it to the higher criticism.' He explained that as some more conservative members of his connexion looked rather askance at him for championing Old Testament criticism, he did not wish to give them a handle to say that this Higher Criticism leads to Play-going and such-like evil ways.²⁵⁵

An aspect of Peake's work which deserves particular attention along with his books for laymen and clergy was his keen interest in the Sunday school movements of the day, and especially in the way the Bible was taught. In 1906 Peake published his work on Reform in Sunday School Teaching, the outcome of a series of nine articles published originally in The Primitive Methodist Leader. Although the main part of the book was concerned with a criticism of the International^{al} Lesson System as it then stood, Peake made it quite clear that if Christianity was to take an intelligent hold upon the next generation, the teaching in the Sunday school, and especially the Bible teaching, would have to be reformed. In one section for example he indicated what could be done in teaching the prophetic movement to children. It had to be remembered that the Book of Isaiah belonged to other authors.

It is indeed a great gain that scholarship has here brought to us. It has shown that the book which for two thousand years has

been regarded as the work of one supreme genius is the production of many writers, and this has brought home to us with great power how much more widely diffused in Israel was the spirit of inspiration than former ages had suspected.²⁵⁶

A new series of International Lessons were eventually drawn up with the assistance of Peake, and were graded according to the age of the scholar, urging a more historical approach to the documents of the faith.

Peake contributed a great deal towards reconciling believers with modern biblical scholarship by showing that its use in interpreting the Scriptures only made the Bible more valuable and divine truth more comprehensible. His works sold numerous copies and some went through several editions. His efforts at educating prospective ministers at Hartley and other colleges and in educating the laity through the Sunday school movement helped to spread the intelligent and critical study of the Scriptures. It has in fact been claimed that he saved the Free Churches of England from a Fundamentalist controversy similar to that which took place in America:

Primitive Methodism was not more friendly to critical views than other denominations, but the remarkable combination of higher critic and sincere evangelist in the character of Peake enabled him to lead his church, and through her other churches, to a faith which though modern in its outlook was nevertheless strictly evangelical in its essence.²⁵⁷

Conclusion

The two hundred years over which modern attitudes towards the Bible have developed convey feelings of

strength and certitude undermined slowly by the forces of doubt. Nineteenth century believers were continually reminded that the ground of their faith was an inerrant and authoritative Bible resting on the external proofs of miracle and prophecy. They had little reason to view the more liberal churchmen early in the century as anything more than Deists and infidels. Coexisting with this certitude however were private doubts about the morality of the Old Testament and public ones about the discoveries of science. When the higher criticism appeared on the scene therefore the public reaction was both strong and negative. The insecurity of the 1860's allowed no room for moderation, especially with regards to a method which directly and ruthlessly attacked that which was held most sacred. It was largely through the reconciliatory work of Robertson Smith, Driver, George Adam Smith and eventually Peake that biblical criticism in an advanced form could be popularized.

The publications which attempted to teach the methods and results of higher criticism to the men and women in the pew depended heavily upon the work of such scholars, both in settling private dilemmas and in determining the contents of books and articles favoring criticism. John Regier Cohu, rector of Ashton Clinton in Buckinghamshire, was himself troubled by the moral and intellectual difficulties presented by the Old Testament, but "found much light poured on its pages by authors such as Robertson Smith and Driver..."²⁵⁸ With a convert's zeal therefore

he set out to help others in their perplexity by producing a book along popular lines. Herbert Knight, another clergyman, in addition to acknowledging his debt to Driver, claimed of George Adam Smith that, "It was the perusal of his fascinating pages, addressed primarily to preachers, which awakened in me, as one who has to occupy the pulpit, a desire to speak in writing to the occupant of the pew, and to show how criticism has enhanced the value of the Hebrew Scriptures."²⁵⁹ Likewise a pamphlet by Professor James Candlish defending the principles of critical investigation to a popular audience was clearly inspired by Robertson Smith's ideas on authority and inspiration.²⁶⁰

Apart from such specific acknowledgments of the sources of critical scholarship, almost all popular works referred either in the text at some point or in a suggested bibliography for more ambitious readers to the major works of Robertson Smith, Driver, George Adam Smith and Peake. Their influence upon the propagation and acceptance of established critical results deserves maximum attention. How the popular introductions selected and handled material based upon the labors of these British critics therefore is examined in the following chapter. There was of course a certain body of factual material concerned with matters such as the dating and authorship of the Old Testament books which was distilled and presented to the general reader. Perhaps more significant however was that body of attitudes and beliefs about the nature and worth of the Bible which had been transformed and which in turn was being taught to the ordinary reader. Central to

biblical scholarship on this side of the English Channel was the indissoluble marriage between faith and criticism; it was this union which dominated the principles communicated to the British public. ^{Like} As those from whom they drew their inspiration, the authors of the popular material firmly upheld an inspired Bible whose power to teach and to save was not diminished but enhanced by critical study.

Notes to Chapter I

- ¹Roland N. Stromberg, Religious Liberalism in Eighteenth Century England (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1954), p. ix.
- ²Philip Doddridge, The Correspondence and Diary of Philip Doddridge, edited by J. D. Humphreys, vol. II (London: 1829-1831), p. 423.
- ³Mark Pattison, "Tendencies of Religious Thought in England, 1688-1750," in Essays and Reviews (London: John W. Parker, 1860), p. 257.
- ⁴Gerald R. Cragg, Reason and Authority in the Eighteenth Century (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964), p. 30.
- ⁵Stromberg, Religious Liberalism, p. 14.
- ⁶Ibid., p. 24.
- ⁷Ibid., p. 18.
- ⁸Charles C. Gillispie, Genesis and Geology (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), p. 6.
- ⁹William Wollaston, The Religion of Nature Delineated (London: Samuel Palmer, 1726), p. 26.
- ¹⁰H. D. McDonald, Ideas of Revelation (London: Macmillan 1959), p. 78.
- ¹¹Edmund Gibson, Three Pastoral Letters (New York: New York Protestant Episcopal Press, 1831), p. 64.
- ¹²William Berriman, The Gradual Revelation of the Gospel vol. I (London: Ward and Wicksteed, 1733), pp. 1-37.
- ¹³John Jackson, Address to the Deists, Being a Proof of Revealed Religion from Miracles and Prophecies (London: 1744), p. 25.
- ¹⁴Arthur Ashley Sykes, The Principles and Connexion of Natural and Revealed Religion (London: 1740), pp. 150-151.

- ¹⁵Samuel Clarke, A Discourse Concerning the Unchangeable Obligations of Natural Religion and the Truth and Certainty of the Christian Revelation (London: James Knapton, 1706), p. 367.
- ¹⁶Stromberg, Religious Liberalism, p. 23.
- ¹⁷Ibid., p. 10.
- ¹⁸S. L. Greenslade, ed., The Cambridge History of the Bible: The West from the Reformation to the Present Day (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), p. 241.
- ¹⁹Leslie Stephen, A History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century, vol. I (London: Smith, Elder, 1876), p. 213.
- ²⁰Origen, it was claimed, received a corrupted text from the Jews which he included in his Hexapla, and then in the fourteenth century, the Jews allegedly gave the Christians a corrupted Bible.
- ²¹Stromberg, Religious Liberalism, p. 72.
- ²²Stephen, A History of English Thought, vol. I, p. 187.
- ²³Stromberg, Religious Liberalism, pp. 77-78.
- ²⁴Stephen, A History of English Thought, vol. I, p. 192.
- ²⁵Greenslade, ed., The Cambridge History of the Bible: The West from the Reformation to the Present Day, p. 253.
- ²⁶Cragg, Reason and Authority, p. 62.
- ²⁷Greenslade, ed., The Cambridge History of the Bible: The West from the Reformation to the Present Day, p. 244.
- ²⁸Stromberg, Religious Liberalism, p. 62.
- ²⁹Greenslade, ed., The Cambridge History of the Bible: The West from the Reformation to the Present Day, p. 244.
- ³⁰Stephen, A History of English Thought, vol. I, p. 244.
- ³¹Edward Royle, Victorian Infidels (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 1974), p. 28.

- ³²Intricate adaptations of the prophecies was what Collins had emphatically rejected in his response to Chandler's Defence of Christianity. Chandler for example, in dealing with Malachi 4:5, had the daunting task of showing that Elias is the same as John the Baptist, and that "the great and terrible day of the Lord" is applicable to the coming of the Messiah.
- ³³Stromberg, Religious Liberalism, p. 109.
- ³⁴Royle, Victorian Infidels, p. 26.
- ³⁵Mary A. Best, Thomas Paine: Prophet and Martyr of Democracy (London: G. Allen and Unwin, 1927), p. 209.
- ³⁶Thomas Paine, "The Age of Reason," part II, The Theological Works of Thomas Paine (London: R. Carlile, 1819), p. 7.
- ³⁷*Ibid.*, p. 8.
- ³⁸*Ibid.*, p. 17.
- ³⁹*Ibid.*, p. 40.
- ⁴⁰Philip S. Foner, ed., The Complete Writings of Thomas Paine (New York: Citadel Press, 1945), p. 737.
- ⁴¹Paine, "The Age of Reason," part II, p. 42.
- ⁴²Best, Thomas Paine, p. 203.
- ⁴³*Ibid.*, p. 90.
- ⁴⁴Robert Cooper, The Infidel's Textbook (Hull: R. Johnson, 1846), p. 142.
- ⁴⁵Edward M. Gray, Old Testament Criticism (New York: Harper, 1925), p. 118.
- ⁴⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 125-127.
- ⁴⁷*Ibid.*, p. 135.
- ⁴⁸John M. Creed and John S.B. Smith, Religious Thought in the Eighteenth Century (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1934), p. 225.

49 A consideration of the significance of Eichhorn necessitates a brief digression to examine the rise of the historical method, particularly as it affected theology and biblical studies. Unknown to scholars of previous centuries, the historical method of inquiry brought a revolution to all areas of learning. The earliest historians such as Herodotus were literary artists rather than scientific investigators, giving descriptions of events but never realizing the complexity of forces which molded things as a whole. The historians of the eighteenth century had not improved upon their predecessors. They moved over the surface of events, passing shallow and artificial generalizations and despising the past. What developed in contrast to this was a method the outlook of which was organic. Historians came to refuse to consider any event in isolation, believing that a gradual transformation was responsible for things as we know they are and have been. The new history was more than descriptive; it criticized the present in light of the past and the past in light of the present.

The historical method as it affected theology and the criticism of the Bible took shape in the hands of the German scholars G.E. Lessing and J.G. Herder. Noted mainly as an art critic and dramatist, Lessing also played a significant part in the development of Christian thought. He was a true devotee of reason, yet was prepared to grant a role to revealed religion in the maturing process of the human race. Especially significant for nineteenth century critics was his distinction between historical fact and existential truth. His "On the Proof of the Spirit and of Power", written in response to a critic of the Wolffenbützel Fragments, Lessing criticized the orthodox proof of Christianity from the historical testimony of miracles and fulfilled prophecy. This system involved truths of fact, related by sensory experience and based on the testimony of others; the proof which it furnished was dubitable and therefore not an adequate basis for the truths of reason, truths of a higher order which were known a priori. The proof of religion involved not a sacred book but personal experience. The rationalists were just as misled as the orthodox in their eagerness to remove the supernatural from the biblical accounts. The veracity of the biblical narratives was irrelevant; the history which they recorded was only the rough husk in which the kernel of truth given to men was to be appropriated.

Grounded in the tradition of Leibniz which approached history as a continuous process, Lessing developed his ideas of the gradual unfolding of revelation and his doctrine of divine immanence. In The Education of the Human Race Lessing revealed both a keen appreciation

for the historical religions such as Christianity as well as a belief that these would all be surpassed sometime in the future. The human race was gradually being educated and these were stages along the way. This educative process was in fact the gradual unfolding of a revelation to mankind. Revelation was not to be understood as special isolated interruptions of the natural process, but rather as an aid in helping men to arrive at new and more worthy conceptions of God already latent within them. Spiritual life for Lessing was present in all things, propelling them forward; the divine lived in all men and was therefore its own apology.

Lessing's work, especially Nathan the Wise, secured the right to uninhibited investigation when it came to theological studies and biblical research. He also suggested problems such as the meaning of inspiration and the way in which religious development could be evolutionary. These notions were taken up and investigated in later research. Herder particularly followed through some of the ideas of Lessing, claiming that one had to return to the first stages of revelation in order to understand its present position. For the Judaeo-Christian tradition this meant a careful study of the mythology and national poetry of Israel as the first expressions of spiritual life. Herder's work also brought the Bible into relation with the other general literature of the time. He was led to conclude that inspiration was not a mechanical process confined to one people, but a God-given insight possessed by all men, enabling them to grasp the divine truth sufficient for their needs.

⁵⁰Gray, Old Testament Criticism, p. 152.

⁵¹Thomas K. Cheyne, Founders of Old Testament Criticism (London: Methuen, 1893), p. 15.

⁵²Gray, Old Testament Criticism, pp. 154-155.

⁵³In the translation he asserted, "...Though I am inclined to believe that the Pentateuch was reduced into its present form in the reign of Solomon, I am fully persuaded that it was compiled from ancient documents, some of which were coeval with Moses, and some even anterior to Moses. Whether all these were written records, or many of them only oral tradition, it would be rash to determine." (Gray, Old Testament Criticism, pp. 175-176.)

⁵⁴In Deuteronomy 4:9 for example the singular prohibition of the worship of the "host of heaven", rites first introduced by Manasseh, led De Wette to conclude that the book could not have been written before the seventh century. Hobbes had already identified D with the law book found by Josiah, and De Wette saw no reason to hesitate in identifying it as such. Confusion as to the analysis of the rest of the Pentateuchal material prevented De Wette from progressing much further in forming a clear conception of the relationship between the documents. In his Contributions to Old Testament Introduction, written between 1806 and 1809, he hovered between the fragment hypothesis and the documentary hypothesis, eventually adopting a stance which was vague and uncertain. The work however did prepare the way for the supplement theory which formed "a necessary stage in the progress of Pentateuch-criticism".

⁵⁵Hupfeld took up the idea suggested in the major work of Karl Ilgen in 1798. In his book Ilgen had supported the thesis the Genesis was composed of seventeen documents which came from the hands of no more than three authors, designated by Ilgen as the first and second Elohist and the Jahwist.

⁵⁶While lecturing in Strausburg, Eduard Reuss planted an idea in the mind of his student K.H. Graf which eventually was to bring the literary analysis of the Pentateuch to a climax. It was a period, claims Cheyne, when Reuss "narrowly missed becoming a hero of Old Testament criticism". (Founders of Old Testament Criticism, p. 177.) The germ idea which came to the lecturer rather as an intuition than as a logical conclusion was that the prophets of the Old Testament were earlier than the Law and that the Psalms were later than both. Reuss' principal object was to find a scheme by which the historical course of Israel's religion would become psychologically conceivable. It was most contrary to nature and reason to accept that the complete Levitical system existed in the first stage of the religious education of Israel, especially since none of the great prophets appeared to be acquainted with it.

Wilhelm Vatke, in his all-important Biblical Theology, had reached much the same conclusion from a philosophical standpoint. Under the influence of Hegelianism, Vatke systematically applied the concept of development to the religion of Israel. The fact that in Israel's political and religious life one could read an evolution from lower to higher forms necessitated a change in traditionally held opinions. Vatke was thus led to state plainly that the Elohist source was of

a late origin, and to reconstruct Israel's history accordingly. Only later in the history of criticism was the true worth of Vatke's method and conclusions discerned, and his work came to govern biblical criticism as it developed in the second half of the nineteenth century.

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- ⁶²Horton Harris, David Friedrich Strauss and His Theology (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), p. 57.
- ⁶³Owen Chadwick, The Victorian Church, part I (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1970), p. 532.
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- ⁶⁸*Ibid.*, p. 77.
- ⁶⁹Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Notes Theological, Political and Miscellaneous, Derwent Coleridge, ed. (London: Edward Maxon, 1853), pp. 44-45.

⁷⁰"Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit," The Christian Observer, 1850, pp. 234-250; "Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit and Some Miscellaneous Pieces by Samuel Taylor Coleridge," The English Review, 1849, pp. 247-271.

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⁷³Thomas Arnold, Sermons, vol. II (London: B. Fellowes, 1845, 5th ed.), p. 415.

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 433.

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⁷⁶The Christian Guardian and Church of England Magazine, 1830, p. 32.

⁷⁷The British Critic, 1830, p. 376.

⁷⁸Gillispie, Genesis and Geology, p. 20.

⁷⁹Reardon, From Coleridge to Gore, p. 285.

⁸⁰Stromberg, Religious Liberalism, p. 20.

⁸¹Gillispie, Genesis and Geology, p. 39.

⁸²Ibid., p. 39.

⁸³Reardon, From Coleridge to Gore, p. 286.

⁸⁴Gillispie, Genesis and Geology, p. 203.

⁸⁵Ibid., p. 193.

⁸⁶Gertrude Himmelfarb, Darwin and the Darwinian Revolution (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1967), p. 232.

⁸⁷Gillispie, Genesis and Geology, p. 187.

⁸⁸Ibid.

- ⁸⁹Himmelfarb, Darwin and the Darwinian Revolution, p. 233.
- ⁹⁰Gillispie, Genesis and Geology, p. 188.
- ⁹¹Dictionary of National Biography, vol. XXXIV, p. 321.
- ⁹²Chadwick, The Victorian Church, part I, p. 563.
- ⁹³Reardon, From Coleridge to Gore, p. 288.
- ⁹⁴*Ibid.*, p. 290.
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- 250 Alexander Hillis, "A Layman's Tribute" in A.S. Peake: Essays in Commemoration, p. 57.
- 251 "People say that they are so sure of the truth of Christianity from their own consciousness that if the whole of the New Testament were lost their faith would still remain unaffected. I very strongly believe this to be not simply a mistake but a very dangerous form of teaching. Dr. Dale and Hugh Price Hughes are the leading representatives of this false theory. On the contrary I say that Christianity is a historical religion, resting upon certain historical facts, and unless these facts are true the experience of which they speak is a delusion." (Peake, A.S. Peake: A Memoir, p. 258.)
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²⁵⁴Peake, A.S. Peake: A Memoir, p. 10.

²⁵⁵Ibid., pp. 96-97.

²⁵⁶Arthur S. Peake, Reform in Sunday School Teaching (London: James Clarke & Co., 1906), p. 100.

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²⁵⁸John R. Cohu, The Old Testament in the Light of Modern Research (Oxford: J. Parker, 1908), p. v. See also George H. Emerson, The Bible and Modern Thought (Boston: Universalist Publishing House, 1890), p. v.

²⁵⁹Herbert Knight, Criticism and the Old Testament (London: Elliot Stock, 1906), p. xi.

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Chapter II
THE POPULAR INTRODUCTION TO
HIGHER CRITICISM

Teaching the Faithful Criticism

The introduction of more than just theological and biblical scholars to the results of critical study expanded in a dramatic way in the latter years of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth. Pastoral concern and an acute sense of responsibility for the spiritual well-being of men and women led minister, educator and church leader alike to present the discoveries of cautious British scholarship in a distilled form. Ready to aid their campaign by this time was a flourishing book and periodical trade which provided reading materials at a price many could afford.¹ Clearly printed and illustrated books of a reasonable length which summarized the results of biblical criticism abounded; periodicals reviewed the books, and both gave readers extensive opportunities to study in print sermons and lectures delivered on the topic. Thus, there began a second stage in the reconciliation and assimilation process in which the work of S.R. Driver, Robertson Smith and George Adam Smith was brought before the literate public.

Those who attempted to write the popular introductions varied enormously in theological position and ecclesiastical status. Ramsden Balmforth was pastor of a Unitarian congregation in Cape Town and also the author of several books on religious drama and ethics. A self-confessed radical even among his Unitarian colleagues, Balmforth nevertheless hoped to revive the Bible as a living force in his day by enabling his congregation to read it in the light of critical principles.² Parish clergymen less exceptional in their theological views however produced the vast majority of volumes intended to disseminate the higher criticism. John Regier Cohu, vicar of Ashton Clinton in Buckinghamshire, published a valuable book on the Old Testament in Modern Research in 1908 which, because of its popularity, was soon sold out and reprinted. Similar to Cohu's book in contents as well as concerns was Herbert Knight's work of 1906 entitled Criticism and the Old Testament. Knight was also in touch with popular opinion and anxiety through his parish work in Shortlands as well as through his travels as Rochester Diocesan Missioner. The popular work of the clergyman Percy A. Ellis was acclaimed by the scholar J. Armitage Robinson with great enthusiasm because of its foundation in pastoral concern:

These chapters are not the utterance of a Biblical critic who seeks to commend the results of his studies in the Old Testament to a wider audience than he can reach in the lecture-room; they are the effort of a parish clergyman who had read and pondered over the labours of others, to guide an intelligent

congregation to a just appreciation of some problems which happily insist on presenting themselves in view of the recent additions to our knowledge of the sacred literature of Israel.³

In addition to clergymen, scholars also adapted their work to the need for less technical introductions to biblical research. Notable among them were W.H. Bennett, professor of Hebrew and Old Testament exegesis, and W.F. Adeney, professor of New Testament exegesis, both of New College, London. Together they produced works on The Bible and Criticism, Biblical Introduction and The Bible Story Re-told for Young People and made individual contributions to numerous popular periodicals and collections of essays.

Common to nearly all popular introductions written at this time were the beliefs, expressed firmly and confidently, that the Christian Church was facing a crisis with which it had to deal; that the Christian faith as well as evangelical piety were not incompatible with the higher criticism but were indeed strengthened by it; and that educated laymen could understand and appreciate what had heretofore been the mysteries of academic circles. Believers, claimed Adeney, had to realize that the Bible was not a book for scholars only; ordinary people for example could grasp the lessons of the Pentateuch and the conclusions of the critics.⁴ It was this belief in the alliance between faith and criticism which largely determined the contents and direction of the popular introductions. Inspiration and religious truth were the keynotes in books

intent upon teaching a "faithful criticism."

It is clear from much of the popular material that an atmosphere of confusion existed concerning the attitudes towards the Bible which churchmen believed were consistent with the Christian faith. Disquiet resulting from moral scruples and advancing scientific knowledge has already been observed in chapter I. Added to this existing anxiety were the even more distressing theories of literary and historical criticism. The cases of Bishop Colenso and William Robertson Smith as well as Essays and Reviews had helped to circulate hints that beliefs about the Bible were undergoing a radical transformation. More alarming was the evidence that an increasing number of churchmen were siding with the once heretical few. E.C.S. Gibson believed that the historical difficulties presented by Genesis were so widely felt, "that no apology is needed for discussing them in the pulpit."⁵ In the preface to a collection of sermons and essays on the Old Testament he declared, "Many persons have felt that the recent 'critical movement', of which they read so much in popular literature, has made it impossible for them to read the Jewish Scriptures in exactly the same way as their fathers did..."⁶ The object of works such as Gibson's was to show that this crisis need not impair the religious value of the Old Testament.

J. Paterson Smyth was a clergyman who was also acutely aware of the dilemmas existing around him. In response he published a series of books written as simply as pos-

n/h ?
 sible, aiming at clarity rather than completeness. The books, sympathetic towards the higher criticism, covered the textual and canonical aspects of biblical development as well as the problem of inspiration. In Our Bible in the Making Smyth wrote, "During the past century scholars have been discussing as ever before the origins and composition of the Bible. While the discussion was confined to scholars it caused little trouble. But now that it has come out into the open in sermons and reviews and magazine articles, the Christian public have grown uneasy and perplexed."⁷ Bits of information gleaned from the mass media or private conversations led many to believe that traditional notions of biblical inspiration and authority had been destroyed, and to conclude therefore that the Bible could no longer be relied upon.⁸ Preachers as a rule selected less than a fourth of their texts from the Old Testament; the prevailing courses of Bible study devoted proportionately less time to it.⁹ Who the critics were, or for that matter, what they wrote, was not common knowledge; what was known was that a significant number of the faithful were "giving up the book" because of the claims of modern scholarship.

At least some churchmen such as Smyth agreed that the trickle of knowledge mixed with half-truths which was reaching the pew had to be reckoned with: "These are not the days," he wrote, "for Christian teachers to hold their peace and risk the faith of one half of their people by humouring the mistaken views of the other half through

fear of disquieting them..."¹⁰ A review praising John Edgar McFadyen's work on Old Testament Criticism and the Christian Church in 1904 noted that the higher criticism was the great and burning question of the correspondents in current religious papers, "and to read their letters is to see how great their need of instruction and advice is, especially of instruction."¹¹ It was believed by churchmen such as Smyth and Knight as well as many others that interested laymen, and especially those who occupied teaching positions at a parish level, should be introduced to the new thinking on the Bible. It was of course hoped that they in turn would introduce others to the basic results of the higher criticism and the internal grounds for believing in Christianity as a divine revelation. Leaders such as Smyth were convinced by the end of the nineteenth century that the Bible had nothing to lose and all to gain from a careful and critical scrutiny. Yet the new theories had to be accepted by the average man, who thus far had remained in the "outer court of the temple" before they could have a permanent place in the general thought of men.¹²

Many introductions to biblical criticism made it clear therefore that their main purpose was not to challenge the scholar but to instruct leaders and teachers within the Christian community as well as concerned laymen. That this purpose was fulfilled by all the volumes designated as "popular introductions for the general reader" is unlikely. There were introductions which were far too ambi-

8 tious in subject matter, treating all aspects of critical investigation in detailed discussions sprinkled with Hebrew words and phrases.¹³ Such books were simply unsuitable for anyone but the most diligent student with an unusual amount of leisure time. This is not to underestimate the Victorian perseverance with works of a scholarly nature, but only to point out that the principles and results of biblical criticism are more likely to have been disseminated by shorter works with clear, large type and concise information minus the "dressing" of more lengthy books. Such popular works were available in increasing abundance between 1880 and 1910. Normally they contained a consideration of the intellectual and theological changes behind the critical movement, the main conclusions of the higher critics and finally some declaration of the increased value of the Old Testament which resulted from critical investigation. The authors of many introductions to criticism clearly hoped for a popular audience, a fact revealed in the preface of two such volumes published in 1901 and 1906 respectively:

My object in publishing these pages is to provide in a concise form a very considerable amount of reliable information which is not generally known and yet which every adult owner of a Bible ought to be at least acquainted with.¹⁴

i/ The person whom I have had chiefly in view is the thoughtful member of the average congregation, and I have written, not in any sense as an expert, but simply as one of the parochial clergy who wishes to popularise the main results of Hebrew scholarship, and so to lead the intelligent parishoner to study the Hebrew Scriptures with renewed interest and profit.¹⁵

Those books which aimed at a popular audience selected and concentrated upon certain aspects of the massive amount of critical material available on the Old Testament. These aspects are set out below in an attempt to examine the actual presentation of critical theories in books, pamphlets and periodicals. They have been selected for attention not because of their originality or their radical nature but because they were consistently emphasized as dimensions of the critical argument which the general public could and indeed had to grasp in order to understand and appreciate the Scriptures.

Adeney in his popular work on How to Read the Bible assured his readers that the truths of the Bible were within the reach of the simplest believer and could be discovered through the use of common intelligence. Care had to be taken however to see that a book which grew out of ancient oriental surroundings was not misunderstood by modern Western Christians. Indeed, two erroneous methods of interpretation prevailed as a result of such a misunderstanding: one method read into the Bible certain preconceived theological concepts while the other seized upon certain fragments to be framed as oracles for all time. Modern scholarship however had shown that the best method of interpretation was historical; the setting and circumstances out of which a passage grew had to be considered before its true value could be discovered. Another popularizer made the point that, "In reading the Bible, we must ever remember that, like all other books, it is

a product of human thought, moulded, as are our thoughts, by a human and material environment."¹⁶

For one thing, an historical approach to the Bible increased the value of the Bible for Christians in the nineteenth century, making it more comprehensible as a guide for contemporary life. This was a theme stressed in much of the popular work. Also the historical method of interpretation enhanced the value of the Bible as a resource book for the preacher. While preachers were discouraged from making the pulpit a platform for teaching the details of the higher criticism, the historical method was advocated as essential to every preacher's approach. It is clear from numerous sermons of the day that preachers found such an approach fruitful. G.A. Cooke for example, in preaching on the Book of Jonah, began: "Let us try for a moment to realize the circumstances which led to the writing of the book..."¹⁷ Of the post-exilic editing of the documents of the Pentateuch, Stopford Brooke claimed, "We have in this creation into the stories of a religious and national unity of development under the sway of two great ideas the first attempt at a philosophy of history. These are matters full of subject for a preacher."¹⁸

One of the major thrusts of the popular material aimed at encouraging believers to treat the Bible as any other book in their historical analysis. J. Agar Beet for example tried to impress upon his readers the ordinary nature, in one sense, of the biblical literature by using

as sub-titles to his general introduction: "The Bible as a Book;" "The Bible as an Ancient Book," and "The Bible as the Book of God."¹⁹ Yet popularizing this concept was no mean task. Much of the difficulty which Christians were experiencing with the higher criticism was due to the belief that the Bible was "a single Western book written all at once and published directly from Heaven."²⁰ Hebrews 1:1 and 2 therefore were often called upon by the popularizers to summarize God's dealings with man: "In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets; but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son...." The verses were taken to mean first that the revelation of God had not been made all at once, but involved a long and gradual process; and secondly, that God had revealed himself through the medium of many individual personalities.²¹ An important aspect of the higher criticism was the understanding of revelation as progressive, a concept discussed in detail below. Criticism also presupposed the recognition of the human element in the Bible. Religious truth was encased in literary material which bore the marks of individual authors and which was tinged with their own limited knowledge.²² Furthermore, it was emphasized that the biblical writers drew upon a whole variety of materials in their task of composition. There were laws and legends, genealogies, rituals, hymns, prayers and parables as well as the strictly narrative portions. The word "Bible", as A.F. Kirkpatrick emphasized, really referred to a whole collection of books or a body of

varied literature.²³

Many people found it difficult to accept this human aspect of the Old Testament because they continued to hold to the miraculous preservation of the biblical text. "Because men believed the Bible to be inspired," wrote Ellis, "they have assumed that it must be free from the characteristics of all other literature, and so they have invested it with an artificial kind of perfection, which the books do not claim for themselves, and which they certainly do not show."²⁴ Yet the suggestion of imperfections should not have come as a surprise to the readers of popular introductions. Long before the higher criticism appeared in popular form, the work of textual or lower criticism had been placed before the public. It was to these results that the popular introductions frequently alluded.²⁵ A careful study of newly discovered manuscripts revealed variant readings and suggested that alterations had occurred either deliberately or accidentally in the copying process. Smyth declared to his readers that the principle of God's refusal to operate miraculously in situations where human ability was sufficient applied no less to the Old Testament text:

We shall find as we go on that never was a book guarded with such scrupulous awe and reverence but that it has come to us word for word as it left the hands of the inspired writers long ago, the evidence will by no means allow us to believe.²⁶

Because of the natural errors which had crept into the text, as well as the deliberate "improvements" of the scribes, believers interested in studying the Bible

were urged to use the most accurate translation available.²⁷ Most frequently recommended was the Variorum Bible for Teachers, published in 1881 and edited by T.K. Cheyne and S.R. Driver among others, and the Revised Version which appeared in the same year. The Variorum footnotes, which distinguished this edition from previous translations, were extended "until a conspectus of the really tenable opinions upon difficult or imperfectly translated passages in the Authorised Version - whether due to the incorrectness of the Hebrew or Greek text used, or to inaccurate translation of a text correct in itself - was laid before the English reader."²⁸ The Revised Version, the object of so much controversy, was favored in most of the critical tools as one of the most valuable aids available. Adeney spoke straight to the prejudices of his readers on this matter:

Now, seeing that the chief use of the Bible is not its contribution to the pleasures of literature, but a practical and spiritual service of far greater moment, is it not a little childish to be neglecting a version that is fitted to aid us in coming nearer to the meaning of the Divine Revelation simply because that version does not altogether agree with the taste of literary aestheticism?²⁹

If one accepted, as many churchmen did, the validity of textual criticism, it was, according to some popularizers, only a short step towards accepting the higher criticism. Sanday for example showed how natural it was to move from lower to higher criticism, and also how difficult it was to draw a hard and fast line between the two enterprises. I John 5:7 showed how a textual

study raised important questions of authorship. External evidence such as the fact that the words were found in only two Greek manuscripts dating from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries plus internal evidence that the verse caused a break in the continuity of the passage suggested that the words were originally a gloss or comment in the margin. Afterwards they were inserted as part of the text and transmitted along with it.³⁰

Preliminary also to the propagation of critical results was a concerted effort to clear up popular misunderstanding about the exact meaning of the phrase "higher criticism." For many believers the words themselves had an ominous ring, ominous enough to preclude any further discussion. Great pains were taken therefore to point out that "criticism" did not refer to a process of condemning or finding fault with the sacred book. Neither was it to be seen as a procedure whereby the merits or demerits of the Bible were exposed to public view. Rather criticism was to be understood simply and positively as the expression of a judgment on the date, authorship and manner of composition of the books of the Bible.³¹

Nor did readers lacking scholarly inclinations need to fear the word "higher". Higher criticism did not mean the study of the Bible by superior persons; it was "higher" only insofar as it was to be distinguished from textual criticism. While the latter probed with care into the exact translation and meaning of the biblical text, the former was concerned with broader

questions of a literary and historical nature.³² The Sunday School Chronicle also pointed out the true nature of "higher" criticism:

There are deeper questions with which this criticism has nothing to do; it is concerned only with these which lie on the surface, and which are, in this sense only, higher than those which lie beneath them. Or, to put the matter in another form: - There are two distinct inquiries: the one purely literary; the other, moral and spiritual.³³

Any antipathy which readers may have felt towards the unknown "higher criticism" was further mitigated by references to the process of criticism which was going on in many disciplines other than biblical studies. For many churchmen critical investigation in the fields of drama, art and literature was not unfamiliar.³⁴ While admitting that literary studies had "gone wild" in some aspects of Shakespearean work, J.P. Smyth insisted that the new discoveries concerning the sources of dramatic material and the meaning of words had made the plays all the more interesting and enjoyable.³⁵ Smyth believed that his readers were likely to receive biblical criticism with a bit more equanimity when keeping in mind the way in which Shakespeare's plays had increased in value.

Perhaps more important however was the assertion that ordinary believers such as those reading the popular introductions had unconsciously been "higher critics". Readers were assured that any interested observer could easily and independently discover the evidence in the

pages of the Bible which first gave rise to eighteenth century critical theories. Criticism was in fact an operation which could be carried out under very normal circumstances. Robert Rainy published a series of lectures for laymen in which he welcomed the application of principles of historical investigation to the Bible but at the same time rejected many critical theories such as that of the two Isaiahs.³⁶ Rainy did however urge his readers and listeners to be open to the advance of criticism by reminding them that the ordinary person could be involved in such a process. Criticism he claimed had no peculiar connection with the Bible but could be carried out with any kind of literature. Suppose for example that the reader possessed a mass of family correspondence which he wished to arrange in chronological order. Having only a few dated letters in hand, the reader would be forced to fall back upon characteristics of style and allusions to contemporary events in order to accomplish his task. The higher critics in a similar manner attempted to date the various documents of the Old Testament. As in the case of the family letters, the process of "criticism" was conducted with the utmost care and respect normally given to valuable documents. In both cases Rainy was quick to point out that one was left only with probabilities and not certainties.³⁷

Family letters were one thing; the Word of God however was quite another matter in the eyes of most nine-

teenth century believers. Yet again the popularisers of criticism insisted that their audiences could conduct their own critical investigations when confronted with certain biblical passages. Astruc, the French pioneer of scientific criticism, had begun his theorizing by observing certain distinct sections of the Book of Genesis which could be separated and identified. Similar evidence, it was claimed, could easily be observed by the ordinary reader.

Any intelligent reader of the Bible for example could readily discover two different accounts of the Creation. Likewise certain contradictions in the story of the Deluge such as the extent to which the waters covered the earth suggested the possibility of two different sources. Anyone could also detect obvious historical errors in the biblical narrative. According to II Samuel 24:24 for example David paid fifty shekels of silver for the threshing floor while in I Chronicles 21:25, he is recorded as paying six hundred shekels of gold. A primitive form of criticism likewise operated when readers began to ask questions about the probability of Moses recording his own death. It struck many people as being strange that the Pentateuch should have mentioned Moses' death and the comment, "no man knoweth his sepulchre unto this day."³⁸ That different hands, and indeed fallible human hands had worked on the books of the Old Testament was a fact which the biblical critics had clearly not imagined or fabricated.

According to J.R. Coahu, the ordinary reader could even go beyond source detection to the discovery of the

clue which led Graf and Wellhausen to date Deuteronomy far later than the Mosaic era. The most "uncritical" student of the Pentateuch could see that in Joshua and Genesis, sanctuaries all over Israel were accepted as valid while in Deuteronomy, the attitude was quite different. The authors of Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers however appeared to take it for granted that Jerusalem was the only rightful center for worship, assuming that the reforms which Deuteronomy called for had taken place in the past. From this clue Deuteronomy was dated sometime around the reign of Josiah while Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers had even later dates confirmed.³⁹

Readers and listeners were therefore assured that many facts which formed the basis of critical theories were obvious to the most ordinary of Bible readers. They were then somewhat better prepared for a more complete initiation into the mysteries of the higher criticism.

Two preliminary matters however still demanded attention. Traditional opinion had been firmly rooted in the veracity of biblical facts, historical and scientific, as well as in the predictive nature of prophecy. The popular introductions to criticism laid the groundwork for specific instruction in matters such as Mosaic authorship and the Priestly documents by discussing the distinction between the truth of edification and the truth of fact. They then turned to the literary structure of the prophetic books by introducing readers to a new perspective on the function of the prophets in ancient Israel.

New Wicks for Old Lamps: Moses and the Prophets

According to Professor James Candlish, most churchmen who had been grounded in orthodox opinion unknowingly subscribed to a form of "dogmatic rationalism" which was just as deadly to faith as the skeptical rationalism which they abhorred.⁴⁰ If critical results were going to be embraced to any extent, the temptation to judge antecedently the nature of a revelation from God could not be yielded to. Believers had been persuaded over a long period of time to regard the Old Testament as a factual and accurate account containing historical and scientific information. The literal interpretation of a passage was generally the accepted one unless allegorical interpretation was obviously demanded. Yet in the popular material on biblical criticism, believers were asked to occupy a much humbler and more open position in which they were ready to learn from the Bible itself "in what manner God has been pleased to make known His will for our salvation."⁴¹

It was of course emphatically asserted that the revelation of God was not meant to teach science. For churchmen sympathetic to the new criticism and even for those who remained uncommitted, the attempts which had been made to reconcile scientific theories with a literal understanding of Genesis had been abysmal failures and the cause of much wasted energy. The inspired teacher of Genesis, claimed one popularizer, had used the science

of his own day, a body of knowledge sufficiently extensive and accurate, to get his message across. The results of modern science would not have conveyed his message any better. The science of Genesis "no more needs to be brought up to date than do the phrases sun-rise and sun-set, which are sufficiently accurate for popular use, to be adapted to the Copernican astronomy."⁴²

The fact that evolution in its broadest sense had been assimilated into the world view of many Christians was used in the popular works as a reminder of the adaptability of the Christian faith and the true nature of the biblical record. Christians have adjusted themselves to Darwin's principle, claimed P.A. Ellis, and found that far from destroying their faith, it has given them profound intellectual enrichment and a new sense of the magnificence of God.⁴³ Evolution, the readers of The Christian World Pulpit were reminded, needed an Evolver as much as Creation depended upon a Creator; it had not detracted from God.⁴⁴ A.F. Kirkpatrick commented,

Scientific research has raised problems which call for a readjustment of old conceptions of the relations of God and nature. Yet there is no doubt that religion has been the gainer... Paradox as it may seem, the laws of nature as they are revealed to us by scientific research, stand to this age in the stead of the miracles which were given to former ages.⁴⁵

While scientific accuracy was very important to many believers, historical accuracy was of even more concern. At stake was the whole edifice of the Christian faith, based as it was upon the acts of God in the sphere of history. Again the popular publications insisted

upon a more open view in accord with the evidence placed before the reader. At first glance the Old Testament appeared to have as its main purpose the recording of certain historical facts about God's Chosen People. A careful examination of the books however revealed that they were not designed to be complete, accurate chronicles. God's divine purpose in giving men the Old Testament was not to supply them with historical information for the sake of historical interest, but rather to make God known to men and to enable men to live in fellowship with God.⁴⁶ Readers were urged to consider for example the fact that the reign on Omri, one of Israel's greatest kings, was summed up in just five verses.⁴⁷ The Guardian concluded:

Criticism has impressed upon us a fact which has too often been overlooked in teaching - i.e. that the books of the Old Testament were written primarily for the religious training of Israel. The tendency has been to teach them too exclusively as a storehouse of facts, and to require a mechanical acquaintance with these facts rather than their intelligent understanding. The writings will not become truly sacred unless their purpose and meaning are spiritually discerned.⁴⁸

Any student of the Bible would also have to admit that there were clearly portions of the Old and New Testaments which were not intended to be taken as historically factual material. Proposed as good examples of this were the parables of Jesus, a teacher who recognized that falsities of fact were at times the best way of getting certain truths across to ordinary people.⁴⁹ In one of his sermons G.A. Cooke claimed that, "Of course

the story of Jonah is not to be taken as literal history; at the same time it is historical in the sense in which the parable of the Good Samaritan, its New Testament counterpart, may be called historical."⁵⁰ Also mentioned were the poetic sections of the prophetic books, and particularly the prophetic visions which were intermingled with historical material. Even those who held firmly to the truth and authority of Scripture did not take such sections as literally true. Candlish expressed the attitude which the popular introductions were trying to inculcate in the following words:

There may be good reason for taking many passages as not strictly historical but figurative, poetical or imaginative. It is a question, not of belief or unbelief of the Bible, but of its true interpretation; not whether we accept what it teaches, but what it really does teach.⁵¹

P.A. Ellis also claimed of the biblical writers:

It was not their object simply to relate by-gone events just as they happened, but to use the traditional stories of the past for the moral and spiritual good of the present and of the future. Their motive was not to write history in the modern sense at all, but to make their materials serve a religious purpose.⁵²

The next task of the popular introductions was to introduce readers to what the Old Testament really did teach and what it was meant to do in lieu of providing an encyclopedia of scientific and historical facts. In short they claimed that the Old Testament narratives were intended to teach certain edifying truths about God and his relationship to man. Historical narratives consequently

were to be approached not as infallible records of events but as an attempt of the author to express a certain philosophy of history, and to examine the inner meaning of a sequence of incidents. Likewise, descriptive material about occurrences in the world of nature was important for what it revealed about man's relationship to the world around him and to the Creator of that world. The truth about God showed through despite the fallible materials with which the author was forced to work. The developing art of photography was called upon as an illustration of this situation: While a camera yielded a far more realistic picture of its subject than an artist's brush, photography still was not an infallible process. It could not avoid reproducing inaccuracies in paintings or sculpture which might come within its focus.⁵³

This emphasis on the edifying truths of the Bible transformed the entire basis of biblical unity, an important aspect of popular beliefs about the Scriptures. In conventional opinion the Bible was regarded as a whole on external grounds such as the fulfilment of prophecy or the existence of "types" in the Old Testament. Historical and literary investigation into the sacred text had served to highlight the diversity of the Bible, often causing anxiety in the minds of believers. An effort had to be made however to get back to a concept of unity, but this time a natural and organic unity, a unity of life and spirit. On this basis a whole new concept of inspiration could be formed.⁵⁴ A new meaning for example

was given to the idea of a biblical "type", a meaning of more lasting worth than that which the conventional view provided:

So Jonah, as we now can see, is a type of Israel, of Israel in its failure to rise to the height of its calling. Swallowed up, as it were, by the Babylonian monster, Israel had been restored to a new life, and is summoned once again to take up its divinely appointed task.⁵⁵

It was also observed that revelation understood in any way other than as the truths of edification could not apply to all men at all times, a claim for the Bible which believers would have earnestly defended. A revelation based upon the facts of biology or geology was impossible and void of all meaning, for it could not be adapted to the different stages of human culture and knowledge, and would thus add "one more riddle to the riddle of the universe itself."⁵⁶ Whether or not the average reader to whom the popular introductions were addressed was willing or able to probe the literal Bible for deeper truths is a question which recurs constantly in this discussion. It is clear however that the truth of edification as distinguished from that of fact was a keynote in the process of communicating critical results. Certain popular introductions set out to explore it further by examining aspects of the Hebrew idiom which involved mythology and figurative speech.

While the popular introductions freely used the concept of myth to explain the origin of particular narratives, there were only a few attempts to delve into the

nature and background of this primitive literary unit.

A.F. Kirkpatrick, in the appendix to a series of lectures given to laymen, described myth along with legend simply as productions of the popular mind intended to convey certain truths.⁵⁷ The Hebrew myth was a difficult concept for literal-minded readers to grasp, yet it was at the same time an important point in the appreciation of biblical criticism. It rarely however received the extensive attention which J.R. Coahu's introduction provided.

Coahu saw the importance of developing in his readers a more truthful notion of the Hebrew way of thinking as well as a more realistic one of the relationship between the Hebrew and other religions. Literary, historical and archaeological investigation made it clear that Israel's religion could not be studied in isolation. It drew upon and was profoundly affected by religious rites and doctrines of the ancient Semites and particularly the Babylonians. Coahu was quick to point out that the Hebrews of course gave these beliefs their own distinct stamp as their religion developed under divine guidance. In reflecting upon the various religions he claimed:

Starting with these fundamental ideas as their basis some 'have built on this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, others mere wood, hay stubble,' some remained all but stationary, others are still in a very low stage of development, while others have all but reached the goal.⁵⁸

At the heart of this primitive religion was a body of myths of which vestiges survived to be used later in the religious history of Israel. These myths were

attempts to answer the questions which occurred to every human being: how did the world and death and man come into being? While a more scientifically and philosophically sophisticated society took one approach to these problems, the early Hebrews as well as their neighbors adopted a different one. They participated in a world in which the gods could become any animal they chose, in which men lived to phenomenal ages, and in which the dead departed to an underground oblivion called sheol. They were satisfied therefore with explanations in the form of stories such as those of the Flood and the Fall.

Cohu touched upon a major difficulty which modern men faced in rightly understanding the Old Testament. They had been conditioned to believe that the early Hebrews thought as they thought, or at least ought to have done so.⁵⁹ This was due to a static view of history which persisted among a significant number of people. It was commonly held that the views of the Victorians and the ancient Hebrews were separated in time only. Biblical characters were regarded as men with a modern outlook living under a totally different set of cosmic laws.⁶⁰ Cohu's introduction urged them to see the Hebrews as men in a different stage of development living under the same natural laws, and asking the same questions as modern man.

Difficult also for the prosaic, matter-of-fact British churchman to appreciate was the figurative speech used in many Old Testament books. As mythology flowed from a

certain condition of mind, the Hebrew metaphors and allegorical expressions flowed from a peculiar temperament. The Hebrew man was intensely practical and emotional; purely intellectual ideas therefore were presented in a way which appealed to the senses generally. From this developed a style and language "revelling in poetry, word pictures, metaphors, similes, hyperbole, figures of speech, imagery."⁶¹ In a sermon on the ascension of Elijah for example T.K. Cheyne showed how the greatest prose-poem in the Old Testament possessed devotional and historical value, and pointed to the author's skillful use of language: "Now the lightening comes closer; we should have said it was like falling masses of fire, but, in his more poetic style, our story-teller can see in it the same chariots and horses of fire, which invisibly surround the dwellings of the just."⁶² For those concerned with disseminating the principles of biblical criticism, the recognition on the part of ordinary believers that figurative language existed in the Bible was a major step. It was essential for a triumph over the problem-ridden literalist view. It was precisely because men had failed to discriminate between imagery and bold fact that they so often missed the spiritual lessons of the Old Testament.

Along these same lines readers were also cautioned to remember that the Jews thought in terms of nations and tribes and not necessarily in terms of individuals.⁶³ It was possible that the attributes applied to individual heroes might really refer to tribes, thus casting doubt

on the historicity of the material while preserving its moral and spiritual truth. This assertion of course had major implications for the biblical treatment of the patriarchs of Israel. Its application to the records concerning Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph is discussed below.⁶⁴ More thoroughly covered in the popular introductions was the application of the category of myth to certain portions of Genesis, particularly the stories of the Creation and the Fall.

Certain elements in the Creation story made it clear that this was not a literally true revelation dictated by God but rather a variation of a basic primitive legend found in nearly all races. The Hebrew tale hinted at the general notions that the earth had developed from water and was composed of fragments from an animal or man torn to pieces. A clearer understanding of the biblical story could however only be achieved by comparing it to the Babylonian tradition in particular. Most popular introductions tended to support the moderate view that these Babylonian elements were part of the Hebrew tradition from the very early days of the race, long before Genesis assumed its final form, and were therefore not introduced to the biblical narrative for the first time by the post-exilic editors and writers.⁶⁵

The main parallels between the Babylonian and Hebrew accounts were viewed as being: that the world was created out of darkness, water and chaos; that the void represented by Tiamat the dragon was cut into two sections, and that

the sun, moon and stars were created on the fourth day. There were however striking points of contrast between the two accounts which were clearly pointed out to readers as illuminating the moral and spiritual purpose of the Hebrew tradition. In most primitive accounts including the Babylonian, the gods involved were themselves created from an original source of all things, such as water. In the Genesis account readers found a sublime conception of one God who was lovingly and purposefully related to his creation, as well as a profound view of the dignity of man. There the reader was confronted not with a scientifically accurate report on the origins of the universe nor with a crude pagan legend; rather he found a narrative expressing certain truths about God and his creation which had universal meaning. There he found an assertion of the essential goodness of creation and a true doctrine of man. The author of an article in The Christian World Pulpit claimed on this point that, "The answer which I have humbly to give after many years of consideration of the subject, is, that in the Scriptural account of the Creation, we have a marvelous and inspired poem, a Divine song, or hymn, of the Creation."⁶⁶ Along similar lines Selby claimed that,

Bible writers of a later generation caught the true emphasis of the sacred story. They did not use it as the foundation of a false science or build out of its intimations systems of magic and astrology. It is a somewhat remarkable fact that they pass by as irrelevant the very things which provoke modern criticism. To their ears and eyes such things were not an essential part of the superhuman message.⁶⁷

The Fall likewise was to be regarded as a story of edifying but not factual truth. Again the popular introductions stressed the insights offered in this portion of Scripture into the rise of evil through deliberate and perverse action. "What matters it whether there ever were a Garden of Eden, an apple, and a serpent?" queried one popularizer. "Sufficient truth is revealed by this simple narrative to make its historical accuracy a matter of extreme indifference. Suffice it that in remarkably early times God had spoken forth some of His greatest and most vital moral laws, and that man had heard."⁶⁸ Believers were meant to look with new eyes at the Genesis story, probing this time far deeper than the Sunday school woodcut of Eden as an orchard surrounded by a brick wall with a serpent standing erect and whispering into the ear of Eve would permit them to go. "...This simple story teaches man to read in his appointed chastisements signs of alienation from God. It implants the first faint hope of a recovery and guides the creature exiled from God to seek, through affiliation with a redeemer, escape from guilt and inward derangement."⁶⁹

The recognition that certain narratives in the Bible were spiritually but not literally true was extended in the popular material beyond the early chapters of Genesis, though in most cases with less emphasis. The stories of the Deluge and the Tower of Babel were seen as vehicles of important truths about sin, mercy and judgment. The

story of Jonah likewise was included in the category of "parable" or "tale", the importance of which was found in its claim of universal hope foreshadowing the New Testament. In cases such as the Tower of Babel story or the account of Jonah, it was not difficult to underplay the details of the story in favor of the edifying truths contained therein. Believers' attention could be directed towards what were after all very important points in the Christian message at relatively little expense. The situation demanded more care and attention however when the historicity of figures intimately involved in the salvation-history of the world was at stake.

Far less certainty prevailed when one attempted to draw a line between history and folk-lore in the patriarchal narratives, and so the popular introductions gave this aspect of Old Testament history more extensive consideration. Traditional opinion predictably held the view that the patriarchs of Israel were individual men chosen by God whose lives were accurately described in the annals of the Old Testament. Against this view was postulated the theory, supported primarily by the German critic Heinrich Ewald, that the names Abraham, Isaac and Jacob stood not for individual leaders but for three waves of migration by Semitic tribes. Those writing popular introductions chose, significantly, a via media for mass consumption by publicizing the views of S.R. Driver.⁷⁰

Driver himself admitted that Ewald's argument had much in its favor, particularly the fact that in Genesis ten

nations are represented as individuals. Furthermore, it was quite plausible that stories about certain individuals would be invented in a pre-critical age to account for customs and institutions which were part of the national life.⁷¹ Driver advanced the view however that it was impossible to eliminate Abraham, Isaac and Jacob from the realm of history. They had been real persons with strong personalities, personalities which had become an inextricable part of the Hebrew tradition. Weight, it was claimed, should be given to the early traditions because of: the tenacity of memory in the ancient world; the close agreement between the two accounts suggesting a single, well-known original; the sobriety of the narratives, disallowing marvels and exaggerations; the lack of historical improbabilities in the material and, finally, the observation that the attitude displayed by Moses was unintelligible unless men believed that he was looking back to God's dealings with the people of Israel in times past and appealing to this. Driver even was presented as quoting Wellhausen in support of this latter point:

The religious position of Moses stands before us unsupported and incomprehensible unless we believe the tradition (Exodus 3:13) that he appealed to the God of their fathers. Moses would hardly have made his way amongst the people, if he had come in the name of a strange and hitherto unknown god. But he might reasonably hope for success, if a fresh revelation had been made to him by the God of Abraham.⁷²

Even if a measure of historicity was granted however, one nevertheless had to admit that tradition and imagina-

tion had mingled, and that the patriarchs had been idealized as exemplary men of God and used as such by the Old Testament writers to convey a moral and spiritual message. Yet what did it matter that these figures were colored with the religious thought of a later era? It was the truth of idea and not the truth of fact which was essential. Readers were not to be troubled by the fact that little could be confidently said about the religious heroes of Israel, obscured as they were by the dim light of the distant past. J.R. Cohu quoted Herbert Ryle on this point in his introduction: "We cannot distinguish precisely the historical nucleus from the idealised picture. We can only conclude that knowledge of the precise details of the history is not of vital importance."⁷³ What was of vital importance was the development of trust and obedience in those who wished to be the Chosen People of God.

As well as emphasizing the spiritual as opposed to the factual nature of religious truth, the popular introductions also attempted to alter the widespread conventional understanding of prophecy. Two errors, claimed Angus Mackay in his Churchman's Introduction to the Old Testament, had to be guarded against if the prophetic writings were to be read intelligently and understood.⁷⁴ The first error related to the character of the prophet. Instead of being considered as a predictor of things to come, he was to be seen as a religious reformer, as an inspired teacher of righteousness and a

revealer of new truths. "We find," claimed Horton, "that the inspiration of our prophet is to be recognized not so much in predicting definite future events, as in courageous God-directed testimony to the Eternal Law of Righteousness which is the will of God."⁷⁵ As a preacher of righteousness, the prophet spoke primarily to his own nation and times, making it imperative for Bible students to consider the historical circumstances surrounding each prophecy.

The second error of popular interpretation concerned the nature of prophetic prediction. Too often the Bible was turned into a book of conundrums as obscure pronouncements were magically matched with fulfilments. A closer look at the biblical method however showed that the prophets sought fulfilment for their words in the generation which they addressed. One of the earlier popularizations of this idea was Brownlow Maitland's celebrated Argument from Prophecy, published in 1877 under the auspices of the Christian Evidence Committee of the S.P.C.K. Popular not only because it aimed at the literate layman but also because of the tremor it caused in the ecclesiastical world and especially within the S.P.C.K., the work made considerable concessions to biblical criticism.⁷⁶ Biblical criticism it was claimed had undermined so many details of the Old Testament that the author felt obliged to emphasize the broad lines of prophecy rather than its concrete details convincing only to the uneducated mind.⁷⁷

He concentrated on four general "forecasts" of the Old Testament: the ultimate triumph of God's cause, the accomplishment of this by a person, the suffering of that person, and the establishment of a spiritual religion rather than one which placed its main stress on ceremonies. Thus, there was no reason to deny validity to the argument from prophecy, provided that the grand prophetic spirit was not confounded with a narrow prescience of specific and isolated events.⁷⁸

Rather than flatly denying, in an extreme position, the prophetic capacity for foreseeing future events, the popularizers generally admitted that the prophets who walked so closely with God could see beyond their own situation to a dim light in the existing darkness. They could predict certain cause and effect sequences because they were in tune with certain moral principles which were eternally true. It was in this light that one had to view the messianic prophecies, an aspect of the Bible which underwent a particularly great transformation at the hands of the critics.⁷⁹ A position was adopted which avoided both the destructive arguments of writers such as Kuenen, and the "magical" view of the traditionalist. Isaiah 7:1-9 for example referred both to some son born in Isaiah's own time as well as to the future messianic deliverer. Events such as the crucifixion were not predicted in detail, and yet the prophet did have the spiritual insight that the hoped-for redeemer of Israel would be a suffering servant. Herbert Knight wrote in his introduction:

Not by any magical process of second-sight, but simply by the exercise of spiritual vision, watching the events that were happening around them, and penetrating further and further into God by virtue of their moral intuition vouchsafed to them, the prophets truly became heralds of the Advent of the world's Redemption.⁸⁰

The Higher Criticism: A Gift from God

The popular works on higher criticism were only partially concerned however to teach the spiritual nature of biblical truth and the way in which modern scholarship viewed the prophets. Such material was invariably coupled with an attempt to present criticism as in no way detrimental to the Christian faith. As J.S. Candlish claimed, if the modern critical views were correct, "they will be seen to be perfectly compatible with the reception of all Scripture, whatever be its method or style, as the Word of God that liveth and abideth forever."⁸¹ Believers had to be convinced that critical study did not supersede but inspired spirituality, and that a devout view of the Bible profited by the critical.⁸²

It was perhaps in this area that the influence of S.R. Driver, Robertson Smith and George Adam Smith was most keenly felt, though their work contributed much towards the popular knowledge of specific critical results as well. It was claimed in 1902 that,

The fact is that one of our strongest grounds for hope is in these very men; for when such men, holding views of literary criticism which

many cannot accept, still stand upon such fundamental grounds of Christian faith, no man need fear that the outcome of this movement will not be with full possession of every vital truth.⁸³

A. Mackay, in his Churchman's Introduction, cites the work of Bishop Gore and the Assyriologist Archibald Sayce as showing the soundness of certain critical conclusions.⁸⁴ Gore for example, the successor to Pusey as principal of Pusey House, accepted the critics' late dating of Daniel. As Mackay points out, Gore and those who worked with him could not have helped but be biased against the new views, and would have departed from Pusey's position only for very sound reasons. Even Archibald Sayce, a staunch opponent of the higher critics, accepted some of the new views as having been confirmed by his archaeological studies, "and seeing that he does this with obvious reluctance, we may well believe that in these we have the irreducible minimum of the settled results of modern criticism."

Perhaps the greatest impression on the popular mind however was made by the conservative scholar Franz Delitzsch. Delitzsch had defended with unparalleled skill the unity of Isaiah until 1881, when careful thought and study caused him to change his mind. The results were revealed in his 1889 Commentary. As Mackay claimed, "The conversion of the great Evangelical critic is a more convincing proof of the truth of the later views on this particular question than volumes of skillful argument."⁸⁵ His opinions on the Pentateuch met

with a similar response. In correspondence in The British Weekly in 1887, Delitzsch declared that he had been won over to the views of Graf, Kuenen and Wellhausen on the Pentateuchal sources.⁸⁶ He abandoned the opinion that the prophetic writer had before him the priestly history of Israel which he completed, and a year later, the same periodical published his remark that,

The intelligence that the Pentateuch contains the Torah, but is not the Torah itself, brings about a liberating effect. God is a God of truth. Love of truth, bowing under the force of truth, giving up of traditional views which cannot stand the test of truth, is a sacred duty, a part of the fear of God.⁸⁷

"These are golden words," declared the Old Testament scholar Emil Kautzsch in the same article, "and they weigh the more since the author, by the frank acknowledgment of the good right of criticism, has made them to become a fact. The service which he has thus rendered to the scientific investigation of the Scriptures...shall never be forgotten..."⁸⁸

The belief that criticism and piety were a viable and indeed essential combination centered upon five points in the popular material: the retention of a concept of biblical inspiration, albeit an altered one; the rejection of rationalist and anti-supernaturalist prejudices; the realization that while certain assured results had been obtained, the basic theories of higher criticism remained a body of probabilities; the insistence that the critical approach had a long history in the Christian

community stemming back to the time of Jesus, and finally the belief that biblical criticism had increased the value of the Bible for the ordinary Christian.

A large measure of popular anxiety was due, according to Smyth, to the exaltation of certain popular notions about inspiration. It was such notions and not the idea of inspiration itself which was usually attacked by the skeptics, causing more and more churchmen to "trample the Bible in the dust"⁸⁹ The belief that inspiration was linked to the infallibility of every biblical detail was mocked by claims of internal contradiction. The belief that the inspired Word must be perfect in moral and spiritual teaching was countered by tales of infant slaughters and divine arbitrariness. The faith in a Bible dictated by God was shaken by doubts as to the superiority of its style and contents.⁹⁰

The popular introductions sought therefore to distinguish between the traditional concepts of inspiration and one which would support both the higher criticism and a living faith. There were no attempts to preach the Bible as anything less than the Word of God. Most of the popular material affirmed A.F. Momerie's position in his sermon series on inspiration, clearly pointing out to readers that the Bible possessed a special authority on matters of salvation which deserved reverence. The Bible was truly an inspired book, but inspired in a way wholly different from that of verbal dictation and infallibility. Believers therefore were encouraged to

adopt a via media which would recognize the discrepancies and difficulties in the Bible while not relegating it to a position of worthlessness.

Perhaps the key to this transformed concept of inspiration lay in the idea of the internal as opposed to external grounds upon which it rested. The popular introductions sought to replace the picture of an angel of God guiding the pens of Moses and the prophets by one in which these men of God were free agents who were inspired because they opened themselves to and received messages from God. The biblical writers were inspired not because they were passive instruments but because they were men of spiritual genius. Likewise the proof for this inspiration rested for readers of the Bible not upon the external grounds of prophecy and miracle and historical accuracy but upon the old Coleridgean dictum that it "found men" in a deeply spiritual sense. Readers would be inevitably responsive to the prophets not because they fired the imagination with maps of the future but because they struck a chord in the consciences of their audiences. The Psalms also showed inherent proof of their inspiration as they expressed universal religious truths more fully exposed by the light of rigorous historical investigation. Charles Mackie gave the following commentary on the fears for the inspired book aroused in the faithful by critical investigation:

They treat the Bible as if it were a Scotch laird whose property rights depended upon the genuineness of some rotten sheepskin

and the authority of an illegible charter, or on the thieving propensities of some rascally ancestor whose doings cannot bear examination...But the nobility of the Bible is not ancestral. It is innate...It commands our respect and reverence, not on account of its origin or supposed origin, but on account of its own intrinsic worth as a word of the living God.⁹¹

The common reader was also advised to keep in mind the distinction between inspiration and revelation.⁹² Horton for example claimed that by revelation he meant a truth or truths received from God by men "not by the ordinary methods of inquiry, such as observation and reasoning, but by a direct operation by the Holy Spirit."⁹³ The Bible therefore was not entirely composed of revelations from God, but contained certain scientific and historical observations available to the natural reason of man. These observations, it was claimed, could be errant or even fictitious and yet not impair the religious truth of the records. Genesis 1 for example revealed to believers the facts that God was responsible for creation and that man was the crown of creation; the scientific details of the chapter were produced by the inspiration of time-bound men.⁹⁴

The popular introductions, then, attempted not to abolish belief in an inspired Bible but rather to alter the nature of that belief. Inspiration understood in this wider sense allowed for the fact that not all parts of the Bible possessed the same degree of spiritual worth; yet this did not mean that the book should be rejected: "Believe it all or reject it all? Indeed! This is a

strange rule...Shall we say to men about us: 'You must give up the use of corn as food, or else eat it, husks and all; and wheat, or else consume that, chaff and all'? Have discrimination and judgment no longer any place in the world?"⁹⁵ Believers could still maintain the conviction that no other writing in the world displayed such an array of spiritual truth. Momerie concluded that, "The Bible, more than any other book in the world, will help us to attain to that righteousness upon which our well-being depends."⁹⁶

Inspiration understood in this new manner also served to emphasize the human role in the composition of the Bible while preserving the divine. Again there was a via media between the concept of verbal inspiration and the belief that the Bible was really not different from other books. It lay in the understanding of inspiration as a process of mental and spiritual enlightenment which worked through faculties possessed by all men. Inspiration did not involve some sudden seizure by an external force, but was widely and continually bestowed to men in communion with God.⁹⁷ One popularizer claimed that the inspiration of the Scriptures was clearly of a higher kind than what was meant when the word was applied to other subjects; yet it was not dissimilar in both its method of working and its limitations. Inspiration enhanced but did not take the place of normal faculties.⁹⁸

Believers were left therefore with the assurance that far from undermining the notion of inspiration, the higher

criticism was allied with a strong and sure defense of it. A sermon recorded in The Christian World Pulpit of 1901 stated the matter in reference to the Book of Jonah in the following way:

Now if you recognize these eternal truths shining in this little book, and giving it glory and dignity, perhaps the question of the literal truth of the story may not seem to you much more relevant than the question as to the literal correspondence of the history in Hamlet with the actual history in Denmark....I certainly think that those who find great difficulty in accepting a story like that should be aware that there is another way of looking at the book and finding it worthy and glorious and inspired; and I, for one, would never think of speaking of a man as an unbeliever who accepted the book in that sense.⁹⁹

Attention was also given to what must have been an important question in the minds of average churchmen: whether or not this new idea of inspiration was in accord with the official creeds of the churches in England and Scotland. There is evidence that many popular writers believed the conventional idea of verbal inspiration and biblical infallibility to be the official one, despite the outcome of the Essays and Reviews and Robertson Smith cases. Yet the free churches, R.F. Horton explicitly pointed out, had wisely refrained from ever formulating a doctrine of inspiration.¹⁰⁰ Canon Henson also declared that, happily, there was no definition of inspiration in the English formulary, and no attempt to indicate which precise version of Scripture is inspired: "The happy moderation of the Thirty-nine Articles has had its effect. In the English Church since its reforma-

tion there has been an unfailing succession of great divines, who have jealously guarded the Church against the danger of an irrational bibliolatry."¹⁰¹ In the same manner Professor Candlish began his lectures by looking at the doctrine of the authority of Scripture found in the Westminster Confession and spelled out in the Catechism. There was, he claimed, nothing inconsistent with Church doctrine in maintaining that some of the narratives in the Bible were not historical and did not describe events that actually took place. One could be sure of biblical inspiration on spiritual grounds, and this was all that was necessary to a living faith. The responsibility of the Church was to declare opinions such as those of Robertson Smith "not irreconcilable" with her doctrine, and then move on to study and discuss those opinions.¹⁰²

One of the major objections to the higher criticism in the popular mind, apart from its alleged destruction of biblical inspiration, was the obvious alliance between German scholarship and the new theories on the Bible circulating in Britain. Continental scholars of every theological persuasion, apart from the clearly conservative such as Hengstenberg, were more often than not classified together as skeptics and rationalists bent upon destroying the Bible. It was as being under their spell that the advocates of biblical criticism were cast in the popular mind. The popular introductions therefore were greatly concerned with stressing the Christian piety

of many biblical scholars, particularly by pointing out that their work was not based upon rationalistic assumptions about the nature of reality nor upon a total and uncritical acceptance of theories circulating in Germany.

Readers were encouraged to clear up their confusion between rationalism and higher criticism. The former was based upon certain clear-cut presuppositions about what was and what was not possible in the natural world governed by certain laws. The latter however was concerned solely with a scientific examination of the biblical record.

The question whether David wrote a single Psalm is not at all a question of rationalism - it has no more to do with this than it has with alchemy. Rationalism does not raise the doubt and the doubt is not suppressed by calling it rationalism. From first to last it is a question of higher criticism.¹⁰³

The popular works therefore supplied, in the words of The Guardian, an "unflinching defense of the supernatural" instead of propagating the philosophical stance of Kuenen and Wellhausen.¹⁰⁴

The popularizers of the higher criticism were of course confident that an examination of the biblical text could be conducted without the interference of a scholar's own spiritual convictions or lack of them. One popular introduction claimed:

Criticism aims to determine what the Bible is; rationalism has contempt for the actual Bible and impudently aims to make it into what, in its judgment, a Bible ought to be. Criticism studies documents, parchments, historic veracity; rationalism produces all results from the individual's particular consciousness...¹⁰⁵

Higher criticism would look for example at an account such as that of Jonah's experience with the whale and pronounce it a pious tale expressing certain truths about God and man. Rationalism would however deny that the event was possible because of its supernatural circumstances. It was clear, as J.P. Smyth simply asserted, that a man's piety could not be questioned because of his critical views.¹⁰⁶

The attitude towards miracles displayed in many popular works illustrated what was believed to be the crucial difference between the rationalists and the Christian critics.¹⁰⁷ Miracles in the Old Testament were not to be dismissed on the premise that "miracles do not happen"; rather, each miracle was to be taken and carefully studied in isolation. Consideration was to be given to the writer's veracity, the trustworthiness of his sources and the general characteristics of his age. If, as in the case of many Old Testament narratives, it was found that the miracle under scrutiny had a natural explanation, this by no means banished God from the pages of the Hebrew story. God's revelation of spiritual truth throughout the entire Old Testament was miraculous. Ordinary believers were encouraged to broaden their concept of miracle as an interruption or suspension of natural law. Thus, the discoveries of the historical critic would be less problematic: "It is not so much the external facts of the Jewish story that are unique, but rather the internal experience of their greatest men,

which in turn reacted upon the course of events through the influence which it exerted upon their national character."¹⁰⁸

Believers were also weaned away from the idea that the value of the miracle was primarily evidential. Miracles did not attest to the fact of revelation, but rather interpreted one aspect of its meaning - the moral aspect. George Adam Smith urged readers concerned over the issue to notice the attitude of the prophets. Miracles in fact were not commonly associated with the prophetic work. When they were however, what was most important was their character, e.g. were they in accord with the will of God and with his revelation of himself?¹⁰⁹

While there was a large measure of agreement in the popular material that faith and criticism was a viable combination, there was less accord over exactly how much German scholarship should be accepted. This was however more a matter of disagreement over certain specific conclusions - usually concerning the analysis of the Pentateuch and dates of the Psalms - than a controversy over the general outcome of critical work. Smyth for example willingly accepted the composite authorship of the Pentateuch but deplored the "absurd extremes" to which the analysis had been carried out by some German critics, while Horton warned that critics such as Schmeidel were just as objectionable as the "infallibilists."¹¹⁰ Wellhausen's theories likewise received a mixed welcome, earning for the German scholar the reputation of being a

radical critic. His hypothesis was certainly presented in the popular material as one which deserved consideration, but the authors for the most part were cautious about giving it their full support. It was made clear that whatever results were discovered and acclaimed by critical scholars, they could be accommodated by the faithful without the corruption of atheistic rationalism.¹¹¹

The popular introductions also attempted to facilitate the acceptance of criticism by assuring believers that it had lost much of its original dogmatic nature. Indeed one of the main complaints of the mathematics lecturer P.J. Heawood, in writing on the higher criticism, was that the confidence with which certain results were stated often seemed to be in inverse proportion to the grounds on which they were based.¹¹² Yet the advocates of biblical criticism were increasingly showing signs of fairness and modesty. Smyth for example cited Driver's Introduction as a major tool of reconciliation.¹¹³ By quoting A.B. Davidson, Kirkpatrick stressed that the critics dealt in probabilities only: "Criticism...in the hands of those who use it with reasonableness is entirely an inductive science. Its argumentation is of the kind called probable, and its conclusions attain to nothing more than a greater or less probability, though the probability may be such as to entirely satisfy the mind."¹¹⁴ The probable nature of the critical conclusions was also explicitly expressed by Bertram Talbot in a

section on the unchronological nature of the biblical material: "The Book of Genesis is one of the very latest, as it was probably not completed before about the beginning of the fifth century before Christ. The oldest written prophecy is probably that of Amos about 760 B.C...."¹¹⁵ In his book in the "Outlines of Christian Truth" series, Robert Lendrum admitted that the views of modern scholars may need much correction, though he reminded believers that they could not come to the Bible with preconceived notions about what they ought to find there.¹¹⁶

More subtle however were attempts to soften the dogmatism of the more radical critics by adopting a more tentative attitude towards certain critical theories. As suggested above for example the "foretelling" element in the prophetic material continued to be recognized along with the idea that the prophets were concerned with their own contemporary situation. Readers were acquainted with the fact that many critics accepted the prophet's ability to trace outlines of the future and so rejected the dictum that if any biblical prophecies were fulfilled, they must have been recorded after the events. On the book of Daniel, J.A. Beet observed that while parts were written in the first person, many things seemed to indicate that the work was much later than the period of captivity. For Beet however the important point in his discussion was that the critics did not know for certain.¹¹⁷ With regards to the same book, Adeney admitted that while the work was more likely of a late origin,

Daniel may have been a historical person.¹¹⁸ It was also emphasized that the critics were only dealing with probabilities when it came to the patriarchs, despite the extreme opinion that the names represented tribes only. Certain archaeological work had confirmed the general outline of the accounts, and Bennett pointed readers to the testimony of a distinguished critic, who said that, "When we come to Abraham a true historical instinct tells us that we are dealing with the authentic record of a real historical personage."¹¹⁹ Quoting the opinion of Driver that the tenacity of ancient memories and the sobriety of the accounts must be seriously considered, W.A. Moberly concluded that, "There are good grounds for believing that the stories of the Patriarchs are substantially true."¹²⁰

In the same manner some popular material made it clear that the critics dating the material in the Pentateuch could really only determine when the documents had reached their original form, and not when the contents originated. Readers then were not to think that the assignment of a late date to certain narratives meant that they originated at this late date; rather, a long and impenetrable period of oral tradition most likely rested behind the material.¹²¹ Some biblical scholars for example claimed that much of the Genesis story was directly borrowed from Babylon at the time of the Captivity, whereas the more moderate critics presented

in the popular introductions saw good reason for tracing such stories to Abraham and his Semitic ancestors from the Euphrates Valley.¹²² Kirkpatrick explained the reasoning behind the more moderate view: it was not likely that the Hebrews in Captivity would have adopted the traditions of their oppressors nor was it probable that such an eloquent people had no Creation story before this late date.¹²³

Along with this note of tentativeness in the popular material however was the equally significant and insistent assertion that critical study had reached some "assured results" when it came to the Old Testament. There was no escape from the fact that biblical scholars dealt in probabilities, but these probabilities, if considered in unison in many cases, produced a firmly established set of general conclusions. It was the "assured results" therefore which were commended to the public. In most introductory books any uncertainties in the critical results were noted and discussed as far as ordinary readers could understand the issues at stake. The point was made however in several volumes that in all disciplines the average person had to trust the conclusions of others and consequently had to realize that he could never penetrate completely into the realm of biblical scholarship.¹²⁴ There were certain results reached by the scholars which could be trusted without complete comprehension of all the evidence or processes involved. Bennett spoke of "conclusive evidence" for the main ideas of criticism, while

Cohu sought to popularize secure conclusions which were based upon many years of patient study.¹²⁵ "It would be impossible," he wrote,

to praise too highly the conscientiousness with which the minutest details have been carefully scanned, the honest suspension of judgment where there was any doubt, the candid acknowledgment wherever a surmise was hazarded, the loving enthusiasm of the student who believes that those only are enemies of the Bible who fail to investigate it, or who shrink from investigating it completely.¹²⁶

The higher criticism was presented as a general trend in thinking; it was not an isolated outbreak of rationalism but an approach to the Bible which was welcomed by the most distinguished and devout scholars. Even conservative scholars such as Franz Delitzsch were beginning by the last decade of the century to accept a few of the critical theories. The British Weekly reported the comment of Robertson Smith that,

It is satisfactory to think that the acrimonious battles of recent criticism have not left things as they were, but that the moderate men on the two sides are much nearer one another than they were a few years ago. Of course those who reject the critical method altogether still remain irreconcilable, and on the other hand the Graf hypothesis has been taken up by hot heads who have made it ridiculous by advancing from it to views entirely destitute of historical sobriety; but the future of research is not in the hands of either of these extreme factions.¹²⁷

That criticism was not opposed to Christian faith was, then, popularized by pointing out the critics' adherence to biblical inspiration, their stand against rationalism, and their tendency to deal less dogmatically with con-

clusions. While these points most likely reconciled some believers to the new thinking, even more popular acclaim was won for biblical criticism by assurances that critical investigation had always been a part of the Christian tradition, and had indeed been sanctioned by Jesus. Also emphasized was the fact that criticism had greatly enhanced the value of the Bible for Christians.

The conclusions of the higher criticism, readers were told, had developed throughout many years of patient study of the Old Testament. Also, the critical approach to the Bible was itself firmly rooted in the most ancient biblical traditions. In the introduction published by Bennett and Adeney, it was claimed that:

It would often help the student of the Bible if he would consider that though these changes seem to him to be a sudden overwhelming revolution, because they burst upon him all at once, yet in reality they have accumulated gradually, they are the result of a long process; they are due to the patient and devout study of generations of Christian scholars; and have long proved themselves helpful and inspiring to multitudes of Christian ministers and other devout believers.¹²⁸

Bennett and Adeney went on to set out the credentials of the higher criticism by explaining to readers that this particular approach to the Bible was even adopted by the Old Testament writers themselves. These authors certainly had not received the work of their predecessors as infallible documents. The critical process was then carried on by the Apostolic Fathers as well as Augustine and both the "Protestant and Romanist

divines of the Renaissance and the Reformation."¹²⁹ It was the assertion however that Jesus himself was in a sense a "higher critic" that made the greatest impact upon the popular mind.

The witness of Jesus to the authorship and authenticity of the Old Testament records was a major point of contention between those who supported and those who opposed biblical criticism. Traditionalists claimed that Jesus, by his very words, verified the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch and the Davidic origin of Psalm 90. George Adam Smith took issue with traditional thinking and instead portrayed Jesus in his Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the Old Testament as an outspoken critic of the Hebrew Scriptures. Jesus as well as his Apostles, Smith claimed, approached the Old Testament with the belief that there was in its laws and institutions, ideals and tempers, much that was rudimentary and therefore of transient worth and obligation. Some of the popular material used Smith's point concerning Jesus, stressing that Jesus was interested solely in the underlying truths of a narrative and not with questions of authorship. Selby's introduction for example commented on the opening narratives of Genesis by saying that: "Every reference to these narratives, made either in the teaching of Jesus, or in the epistles of Paul...is rigidly limited to the ethical and religious lessons they enshrine, and the mere literary incidents of the narratives are passed by in silence."¹³⁰

According to churchmen like Bennett and Knight, it was unfortunate that the popular mind associated biblical criticism solely with the denial of traditional views on the books of the Bible. "When the history of the Higher Criticism of the Old Testament is finally written," declared C.F. Kent, "it will be declared most unfortunate that the results first presented to the rank and file of the Christian Church were, as a rule, largely negative and in many cases relatively unimportant."¹³¹ People were so absorbed in this negation however that they failed to see the constructive side of criticism. The Bible however had been accorded a place of even greater worth as the inspired book of God by many devout critics and their sympathizers. One preacher claimed that, "For my own part, when I came to understand in some small measure at least, what modern thought and criticism meant, I tell you in all honesty that the Bible came back to me, and it means to me today what it has never meant before."¹³²

The preacher Henry Ward Beecher concluded:

I love the Word of God; and the more I free it in my mind from superstition, from narrow ecclesiasticism, and bring it into the atmosphere in which it was born and in which it has lived - the more I make it the man of my counsel, the guide to my path and the lamp to my feet - the sweeter it is to me.¹³³

The exalted position of the Bible therefore only had to be made clear to the religious public.

A Bible class primer outlining Christian doctrine in the light of modern scholarship was praised by the religious press in 1906 for bringing out the spiritual value

of the teaching of the Bible. "There have been indications that the age of criticism is passing, and that we are entering upon that glad harvest-time when the results of criticism can be reaped in a richer apprehension of God's character and work."¹³⁴ The higher criticism had indeed gone far towards curbing extravagant interpretation, answering moral and historical questions, and making the Bible a living document with meaning for contemporary man. In the conventional approach to the Bible, the main characters had lacked "flesh and blood," appearing more as puppets than as human beings. A historical approach to the Old Testament however lent an important sense of immediacy to the people involved. "No one can read such a book as Mr. G.A. Smith's 'Isaiah' in the Expositor's Bible without feeling that Isaiah lives for him as he probably never did before."¹³⁵ This "person-oriented" aspect of the new scholarship was also clearly reflected in the collection of books entitled "Men of the Old Testament." Here was a series of biographical sketches which, while concentrating on personality and the messages of the ancient men of God, did not fear to use the results of the critics where appropriate. The human feelings and experiences reflected in the accounts were, furthermore, of great value to all men regardless of the actual historicity of the material. Believers could read their own human experiences into the lives of Abraham, Moses or David: "We ignore them as history, we preach on them as humanity. These are

the grounds on which these discourses have been written, and this is the reason of their existence."¹³⁶

It was pointed out to readers that this redemption of the Old Testament came at a particularly suitable time. Matthew Arnold lamented that, "The masses are losing the Bible."¹³⁷ T.K. Cheyne spoke of the opinion put forth in sermons that the Old Testament was of no particular importance. All that was necessary for the Christian, declared A.F. Kirkpatrick, was the New Testament, so ably defended by apologists and expounded by commentators.¹³⁸ The Old Testament, apart from the Psalms, had been virtually rejected in some quarters as unsuitable for public reading. Where it was not ignored, noted Kirkpatrick, it was misinterpreted: "Even where the Old Testament has not been ignored, too frequently its poetry has been spiritualised beyond recognition, and its prose has been widely removed from its historical setting; whilst as for its magnificent prophecy, it has been rendered unintelligible by crude extravagance."¹³⁹

The underlying causes were not difficult to discover: Many people found the Old Testament vague and irrelevant, concerned only with an order of things removed from their everyday experience. The Christian World Pulpit announced that the Bible had become "a puzzle and a torment" for many English people.¹⁴⁰ Added to this was an element of disgust with the "unlimited license of interpretation" which prevailed.¹⁴¹ Finally there was the vague suspicion discussed above that one

could no longer use the Old Testament with any confidence; questions of a moral, scientific and historical nature demanded answers and the fear was widespread that these answers discredited the Old Testament.

One aspect of the "regenerative" process stimulated by the new scholarship stood out among others: the higher criticism had made it clear that a study of the Old Testament was indispensable for a right interpretation of the New.¹⁴² Stronger links were forged, it was believed, as the Old Testament was understood as a progressive revelation of moral and religious truth. Just as childhood prepared for manhood, so the religion of the Old Testament prepared for the coming of Christianity. It was here that one found the roots of righteousness and self-sacrifice more fully developed in the New Testament. The whole Old Testament was in anticipation of Christ, not in the conventional sense of detailed forecasts, but insofar as it showed the progressive accomplishment of God's purpose in history. Gibson claimed, in his defense of the higher criticism, that with the man seeking God,

The progressive experiences of past ages will strike chords within him which harmonize with the isolated notes of his own life. The imperfect expression of the truth he is seeking should lead him as it led the ancient Hebrews out of the Old and into the New... till he first admire, then reverence, and love and finally worship the God he seeks as he finds him in Jesus Christ.¹⁴³

It was also suggested by a number of popular books that believers were now free from the ceaseless worry

over certain discrepancies in the Old Testament, acute embarrassment over moral crudities and endless conflict between science and Christianity. It is not likely that a great deal of time was spent by average Christians in pouring over contradictory texts in the Old Testament; books claiming to solve all such difficulties were written by the score hoping to preserve orthodoxy, and most were printed and priced with the general public in mind. Yet the help higher criticism could give with historical difficulties was not ignored. It was a strain for example on an intelligent man's credulity to ask him to believe that immediately after their release from Egypt, the Israelites were disciplined into a nation with complete civil and ecclesiastical legislation. The higher criticism answered this by giving a new order to the religious growth of the people. Christians had been trained to believe that an elaborate legal system was given to Israel in tact at the beginning of their national life, whereas, according to a study of the sources, that was almost the last thing perfected.¹⁴⁴

The problems over morality and science however were more likely to have struck even the most pious soul in an hour of meditation or conversation. It was in these areas therefore that the discoveries of the higher criticism were seen as being of greatest comfort. A sermon of 1886 for example spoke of the verbal acrobatics carried out by many Christians in order to get the words of the Bible to agree with geological and biological

theories. The higher criticism, the audience was told, offered believers another alternative, just as much in agreement with the Christian faith as traditional views were believed to be.¹⁴⁵ Knight suggested in his popular introduction that the science and religion controversy could be alleviated if more Christians were willing to understand miracles as meaning more than physical irregularities and to accept certain miraculous accounts as records of natural occurrences, as the higher critics often recommended.¹⁴⁶

Popular books and sermons also attempted to communicate the critical concept of the Bible as a record of progressive revelation which embraced the early stage of the Hebrew civilization as well as the most sophisticated stage of Christianity. It was within this context of gradual human development in religion and conscience that one had to approach the morally offensive parts of the Old Testament. This was one of the most revolutionary of the new ideas, for it completely transformed conventional thinking on man, and God's relationship with him. It was no longer possible to preach a total, moral revelation in the Garden of Eden, or the creation of a perfect man. If the Bible was studied carefully, a situation of gradual training and response became evident in the realm of moral behavior. The Old Testament however was of no less value as a vehicle of religious truth because it fell short of Christian standards. God worked out his purpose in spite of human

fallibility.¹⁴⁷

The evidence for progressive development in morality could be easily detected by readers. They could not avoid being struck by the cruelty and savagery of certain parts of the Old Testament, yet in Deuteronomy and the teaching of the prophets, they saw a more humane code which stressed holiness, benevolence and inward piety. The worth of the individual was immeasurably greater than in the material of an earlier date. But even Deuteronomy could be exclusive in its treatment of men, as compared with still later writings found in Proverbs foreshadowing the New Testament command: "If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink..."¹⁴⁸

Readers were told that the insistence upon verbal infallibility in the face of obvious historical inaccuracies and moral difficulties only provided more fuel for the fires of skepticism. Indeed, the chief of all skeptics and infidels was the teacher who displayed a blind bibliolatry.¹⁴⁹ The popular introductions therefore sought to present biblical criticism as the one viable means of combatting an ever-growing skepticism. The "suspected and dreaded science" had become the armory of the Christian apologist and religious men were drawing new strength from studies which, a century ago, were almost unanimously denounced.¹⁵⁰

Bennett in his preface described criticism as a gift from God to the Church, "a gift which provides the Christian

with clearer light and a firmer assurance for his own spiritual life, and furnishes him with new weapons for his warfare with sin and unbelief."¹⁵¹ In the past the believer had to depend solely upon tradition when it came to questions about the nature of the Bible. Now however he was provided with conclusive evidence and arguments with which he could confront the skeptic, evidence and arguments which confirmed the general historical outlines of the Old Testament and highlighted the spiritual nature of biblical truth. In a work on the nature of prophecy Maitland aimed at clearing the argument from prophecy from "needless digressions, superfluous adjuncts, and those elements which modern research has shown to be untenable or no good against the sceptic."¹⁵² One popular introduction quoted T.K. Cheyne in commenting upon this positive assistance yielded by the higher criticism:

Those who imagine that the safety of the Church consists in ignoring critical questions make a fatal mistake. Scepticism he [Cheyne] pronounces 'a force which can only be met...by complete readiness to accept and assimilate critical facts.' The true issue before us is this: Shall the Old Testament be an abiding possession of the educated laity, or shall it be given up?¹⁵³

be? The apologetic value of biblical criticism would have been particularly significant to readers when it was related to the work of foreign missionaries. It was pointed out for example that emphatic testimony as to the value of higher criticism in the Indian Mission field

was given in the 1910 report of the Edinburgh Missionary Conference. The Bishop of Madras was quoted as saying:

The growth of the higher criticism of the Bible is tending to bring out into very strong relief the fruit of the Christian doctrine of inspiration in opposition to the mechanical theories of inspiration held by both Hindus and Mohammedans. The higher criticism has also cut the ground from under a large number of shallow objections to Christianity based upon the scientific or historical inaccuracies of the Old Testament, which have been spread broadcast throughout India by cheap agnostic literature from Europe and America.¹⁵⁴

Another missionary working primarily with Hindu and Buddhist students in Ceylon declared:

The higher criticism is I believe doing a great deal of good in paving the way for the evangelisation of the world. To begin with, it is affecting missionaries, and giving them reasonable answers to the difficulties which are always being brought up before one... The conception which has been growing in the missionary body of the Bible as a history of revelation, is of tremendous value in meeting these new faiths out here. It clears away a great deal of unnecessary scaffolding. Moreover, it simplifies the preaching of the Gospel...¹⁵⁵

Another advantage which modern criticism had afforded believers was in the opportunity to compare the sacred record with a wide range of literature, an exercise which clearly revealed the supremacy of the Bible.¹⁵⁶ It was claimed that believers could face the modern world with the secure conviction that the Bible, after all was said, still held a place of spiritual authority over and above all other literature. It was, claimed the popularizers, unprofitable to judge Israel in the light of modern standards. Instead the beliefs and practices of the

nation had to be viewed not only in the context of progressive revelation, but alongside the "awful immorality" and "unspeakable religions" of contemporary peoples. In no other ancient state was the idea of God so lofty yet tender, the laws humane and the literature concerned with compassion towards the poor.¹⁵⁷ Only those no longer enslaved by mechanical theories of inspiration however could fully appreciate the great treasure which they possessed. "...The authority of the Bible," it was said, "lies beyond the reach of all criticism; and indeed, is only brought into the more-impressive prominence as criticism clears away whatsoever is morally repulsive or intellectually intolerable."¹⁵⁸

The Hebrew account of the Creation and the Deluge for example showed many similarities with the Babylonian tales. Because of this relationship many readers were inclined to believe that the uniqueness and the inspiration of the sacred records were lost. Such a comparison between the biblical and Babylonian material however had the opposite effect according to the popular books. Believers could thereby be impressed by the true superiority of the Old Testament in spiritual and moral matters. The sacred authors may have adopted certain elements from the Babylonian accounts, but they went on to give the stories a stamp of their own, making them vehicles of religious truth and giving them a distinctive ethical code. Selby's handling of this matter in popular terms

is worth quoting at length:

The sacred writers changed the basis of religion by affirming the unrivalled supremacy of God in those mysterious and unwitnessed acts out of which the heaven and earth arose. We are made to see not a battle of foul monsters and portentous demi-gods,...but a holy, resistless and all-quickenning will, fulfilling itself through a series of serene and sublime decrees. Men are taught that God is not begotten of matter, but is its unseen, mysterious and vitalizing cause...Man's thought about the infinite is set into a higher pathway. Is such an end worthy of divine inspiration or is it not? These truths about God are plain and obvious to us, but for the early races of mankind they were daring and original to the last degree, a veritable opening of the long-sealed heavens. The texture of the curtain may be old, but a new design is wrought into it, and a new glory adorns it.¹⁵⁹

It was thus explained that the grafting of the thoughts of God on to a primitive tradition did not in the least detract from the inspiration of the biblical narratives. The practice was presented as an exemplary mission strategy, so much on the minds of British churchmen at this time. In order to effectively communicate the faith, one had to take and use what was sound in alien religions and shed new light upon it. Selby wrote on this point that,

An inspired book might conceivably have covered entirely new ground, and have been invested with an academic perfection of form which would have put it beyond the reach of the common mind; but from the practical standpoint, such a faultless novelty in literature would have been the worst possible form of imperfection.¹⁶⁰

The differences of opinion among Christians which so seriously hindered cooperation in the work of God were also emphasized as reasons for an enlightened

study of the Bible. "Modern research has already done much to break down ecclesiastical divisions," declared J.A. Beet. "We may hope that by submitting all our differences to the Book of God we shall attain, in doctrine as in all else, unity in the One Father, the One Lord, and the One Holy Spirit."¹⁶¹ The discarding of verbal inspiration for example promised to put an end to the use of proof texts which had been a great source of mischief. To them could be traced the manifold sects of the Protestant Church: "Indeed, what stronger evidence could be given of the erroneousness of verbal inspiration than the reductio ad absurdum proof offered by the sects and heresies of Christendom?..."¹⁶² Fewer and fewer churchmen were attempting to wring from the Old Testament the statutes for governing a Christian commonwealth or an obligatory scheme of ecclesiastical order. A historical and critical study of the Bible was also "ministerial to the blessed consequence of religious peace", because of the scientific nature of the interpretation with which it was associated.¹⁶³ If, in following the advice of the moderate critics, the meaning of a passage could be clearly discerned, there was some hope of general agreement among all Christians:

If all sensible men can be induced to agree as to the plain meaning of Scripture, to that degree there is hope of a diminution of those lamentable sects and schisms which have arisen largely from divergences of interpretation.¹⁶⁴

In looking at the biographical stories of the Old Testament for example, churchmen may differ over points of

doctrine or philosophy suggested, but they could not disagree over the essential humanity displayed in the honesty and hope, selfishness and pride, of the characters. Sanday concluded that:

Perverse and sectional interpretations of the Scriptures will not be able to live in the future as they have done in the past in the face of an instructed public opinion. As knowledge widens, all classes of society will move together more than they have done. We may look to have a larger consensus of opinion, and along with it, a greater readiness to join in concerted action.¹⁶⁵

Finally, it was brought to the attention of popular audiences that the Bible had become a more valuable book for believers because the higher criticism had made its contents more clearly relevant to the lives of ordinary Christians. This was effected first by directing attention to the prophetic material of the Old Testament, and secondly, in the provision of massive popular aids for readers in their study of the biblical text. The prophetic material had long been ignored or misunderstood by the vast majority of Christians and their pastors and teachers. The ordinary worshipper, according to B.J. Snell, divided the prophetic writings into two parts: those propositions which were self-evident and those oracles which were dim, perplexing and past all comprehension.¹⁶⁶ The prophets had been shunned as being too abstruse for the average believer, or valued solely for "the gleam of some evangelical utterance that comes as an occasional flash of light amid page after page of unmitigated dullness."¹⁶⁷ Yet when considered in the light of historical investigation, the pro-

phetic books became comprehensible and meaningful to contemporary readers.

Particularly noted was the renaissance which the prophets might enjoy at the hands of contemporary preachers. W.G. Jordan for example believed that the message of the prophets especially could be appropriated to the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. He did not deny that this would take some arduous study: the preacher had to carefully work through the processes of criticism in his preliminary work, processes which cannot be seen by the mass of people to whom his results are presented. Instead, the pulpit was the place to declare the prophetic message, a message which was national and social in character and which emphasized the unity of life in contrast to the modern ideal of compartmentalization. Religion, in short, had to embrace the whole of life. ¹⁶⁸

ed/ George Adam Smith also dealt at length with the prophetic renaissance and its implications for the preacher in his renowned work on Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the Old Testament. He welcomed the revival of the prophets in the Scottish pulpit, attributing it in large measure to the nation's increasing awareness of social problems and to the publication of Robertson Smith's Prophets of Israel. ¹⁶⁹ The prophets, indeed, as preachers to their own time, could teach some important lessons to modern preachers. They warned against both over-confidence in established ritual and against a base other-worldliness which sought in necromancy a knowledge of the future.

Their teaching developed at a time of urban growth, a situation so much on the minds of Smith's contemporaries. Finally, they taught that a preacher must speak out against sin, regardless of his own financial interests, the dictates of ecclesiastical policy, or the attractions of popular acclaim.

The sublime beauty of both the literature itself and the accompanying spiritual observations was also recovered in the process of critical study. "Think of the changed attitude in regard to the little book of Jonah," B.J. Snell urged his readers. "Not so long ago, whenever that book was mentioned among intelligent people, something like a smile of derision swept round the company; they all thought that the 'great fish story' was ridiculous, and very little heed was paid to any part of the book's contents besides that. But the new scholarship has enabled us to appreciate this little book as one of the most beautiful and instructive pieces of ancient literature ..."¹⁷⁰ The book taught the universality of Divine law, and the fact that God was a forgiving God, acknowledging the repentance of men. Many who had been alienated from Jonah had found new enjoyment in the biblical story; believers who had used it superstitiously were taught to appreciate its spiritual truths. a/

Most important to the late Victorian readers, claimed the popular introductions, was that aspect of the prophetic message which stressed social amelioration and a clear consciousness of civic and national sin. Kirkpatrick

asked in his lectures, "Is it not at least possible that there are some principles exhibited in the divinely ordered commonwealth of Israel, and emphasized in the social teaching of the prophets, which need to be brought to light and applied to the solution of our present difficulties?"¹⁷¹ It was obvious that God demanded social righteousness from his people whether in the seventh or the nineteenth century. New life was therefore fused into dead material as it was realized that,

God's interest in His people extended to every detail of their social morality, to their trade and industry, to their land-tenure and the sanitation, to their methods of gaining and spending wealth, to the condition of their streets and houses, and to their treatment as a nation of the outcast and the poor.¹⁷²

The new scholarship had also given rise to a number of popular aids which helped to make the Scriptures more readable and comprehensible to the ordinary Christian. Critical investigation had brought to light much new knowledge which clarified and explained the words and phrases of the Old Testament and which placed the sacred books in their proper historical settings. No longer was a simple, earnest study of the Bible without the aid of external resources encouraged. Instead, a host of popular "tools" were recommended by the popular introductions to assist Bible readers in understanding the date, origin and historical context of specific Bible passages. These popular tools are discussed in more detail in the following section.

Critical Tools for Laymen

"Why study the Old Testament in the light of critical scholarship?" was a question which A.S. Peake anticipated from many ordinary believers.¹⁷³ What popularizers such as Peake attempted to impress upon the layman's mind was that the chief concern of the Old Testament was religious. It was as a source of spiritual and moral truth that men must first come to the Bible, and yet the popularizers could not stop at this point. Laymen had to become aware, if even in the most general way, of the results of literary and historical criticism if they were to fully appreciate this religious element. History was the arena through which revelation came, and as the history of Israel was enshrined in its literature, diligent Christians must come to know that as well. They must check the reliability and nature of their sources, put the sources into chronological order, and sift their materials in order to construct an orderly and reliable story.

The development of biblical literature as traditionally taught presented grave anomalies to people of common sense. The marvellous depth and spiritual maturity of the writings attributed to David sprang from the midst of cruelties and vices; the prophetic utterances flowed with full force and then Israel was suddenly plunged into darkness, implying that for almost five centuries, the nation had no religious history at all. Yet if the Bible

was to be examined like any other book, such a view of its literary development simply could not stand the test of rational scrutiny: "Either we must give ourselves some better account than this of the growth and progress of Hebrew literature, or we must be content to let it lie by itself, outside the laws that we can trace everywhere else..."¹⁷⁴

Peake as well as Adeney and others emphasized that a transformed view of the sources and history of Israel's religion did not mean that one had to be a polished Old Testament critic.¹⁷⁵ The Bible was not a book for scholars only; ordinary people could grasp the lessons of the Pentateuch - and the general conclusions of the critics. Most frequently emphasized was the importance of a popular grasp of the concept of composite authorship, particularly as it related to the Book of Isaiah and the books of the Pentateuch. The popular introductions did not attempt to provide a detailed analysis of the various arguments over the dating of the sources discussed. These problems for the most part were left to the academic circles. The introductions instead emphasized the concept of compilation, and the general idea that the chronological arrangement of the material was other than had been traditionally supposed. From this, within the context of faith, believers could see for themselves the progressive nature of God's revelation, through morality and religion, culminating in the perfect revelation in Jesus.

By way of introduction to the problems of authorship and date in the Old Testament, several of the popular books presented brief discussions on the nature of primitive oriental historiography. It was explained to readers that the Hebrew writers were very different from the modern historians who studied and digested certain authorities and then composed a new work. The Hebrews were more like the medieval historian who made only occasional alterations in the material he received. The material passed on to them was at times placed in a new framework, or supplemented by new information, but it remained basically the same. Thus one found double accounts of a single incident with no attempt to combine the narratives. Also the Hebrew authors were known to place material not meant to be taken literally, such as prophetic visions, alongside historical matter, with no indication of the difference. Alfred Holborn assured his readers that this method was very much in harmony with God's way of working. It would have been strange indeed if the God who spoke "at sundry times and in diverse manners" should not have used many people to contribute to the nation's history and laws.¹⁷⁶

P.H. Wicksteed attempted in an unusual exercise to show both the validity of dividing the Pentateuch into documents and the ease with which even the ordinary reader could participate in such a study. He began by showing that it was impossible to give a date for the books of Exodus or Isaiah in the same way that it was difficult to assign

a date to a hymnal or a collection of poems. Readers were then asked to imagine an author taking Bright's History of England and weaving into the texts extracts from older histories such as that of Robert of Gloucester or the Annals of Morgan, so as to make a continuous narrative. How could one say that it was from the twelfth, thirteenth or nineteenth century? Wicksteed continued:

Now it would not pass the wit of man to find the joints of this composition and to take it to pieces! The trained student would instantly perceive that the beginning and the end belong to each other, and that if all the middle part is left out, there is no break in the sense. Then on looking closer he would perceive the old forms of words in the passage which rehearses the successive conquests of England.¹⁷⁷

Readers were encouraged to study the composite history which the book reproduced because it could give them a vivid idea of the way in which many of the Old Testament books were put together. It would also give them some ideas of the principles on which modern scholarship proceeded in discerning the documents from which the books were composed. It was made perfectly plain that the task was not one for experts only:

A very little study and practice will enable even the English student to recognise both the thought and the style of the principal groups of writers in the Hexateuch and to convince himself that the analysis of the books into the constituent elements is as far as possible from being the mere arbitrary creation of a set of book-worms who have spun it out of their own entrails.¹⁷⁸

The introductions also readily pointed out that criticism had not rendered the Bible worthless by shattering

it into fragments. The Bible in fact was compared to one of the great English cathedrals and the historical criticism to the architect who, without disturbing a single stone, examined the pile and discovered the various styles of art and the various periods of time which they represented.¹⁷⁹ Believers may have had to accept a new arrangement of the Old Testament books or sections of books, but it was only on the basis of sound scholarship and a high regard for the Bible that they were encouraged to do so.

Most of the popular material did not refrain from presenting those features of the documentary hypothesis upon which the critics were generally agreed. Asserted as one of the sure results of critical study was the theory that Moses did not write the Pentateuch as it stands in the Old Testament. The childhood notion that in books such as Genesis is found a body of information passed on from God to Adam, from Adam to Abraham, and from Abraham to Moses had to be dismissed. Instead, believers were taught that the Pentateuch as well as the Book of Joshua were compiled at a late date from a series of documents written centuries apart. Bertram Talbot, the author of a popular work on the history and growth of the Bible, expressed this central thesis of literary criticism in the following terms:

The books of the Old Testament are to a great extent the work of compilation; their present literary condition shows traces of frequent revision, blending of unrelated parts and often of earlier documents which

have been woven into later work. Sometimes no attempt has been made to do this, but the same events are recorded twice, but with variations. Thus we have two accounts of the Creation, two accounts of the Flood and so on...¹⁸⁰

Nor did churchmen hesitate to use the theory to clarify the Scripture message as it was proclaimed in the context of worship. In a sermon on Genesis 15:1 Walter Moberly told his hearers that, "It is well to remind ourselves, when we reach the story of the Patriarchs, of the probable nature of the record. Two separate writings are embodied...in the Pentateuch; one of about the date of Ezekiel, the other of the early Kings." The later one, containing genealogies and dates, had little bearing on the text at hand. The earlier one, however, with its repetition of certain narratives, could be of great help to those who sought to understand - and trust - the sacred Scriptures. Moberly explained that the earlier source was really composed from two sources, one written in the southern part of Palestine and the other in the north. "This is a valuable fact, for the two stories are practically the same, and it shows clearly that they are each independently derived from an earlier account. They put in writing, as we believe, a cherished tradition which has preserved with great and reverent care the beginning of the nation."¹⁸¹

Herbert Knight, when Rochester Diocesan Missioner, cooperated in editing a companion to the Church's lectionary which aimed at elucidating those portions of the Old

Testament which were read in public worship on Sundays and Holy Days. Taking the form of a series of short, homiletic expositions, the book aimed, among other things, at showing that the work of modern criticism brought real gain to the reader of the Bible. "In each case," claimed the editors, "we begin by stating succinctly the critical origin: then, we try to explain something of its primary significance in relation to the circumstances of its own day: and, lastly, we have thought it well to add as a rule some words about its value for modern religion."¹⁸² The lesson for Septuagesima, Genesis 1:1-2:4, began:

The Book of Genesis, from which our lections now begin to be taken, is obviously a composite production. No reader can fail to notice sundry repetitions, and even contradictions in the English text. Modern scholarship, however, has solved the difficulty by proving that the Book is a compilation of several narratives, differing from one another in style and language as well as in contents. And as the same documentary strata are apparent in the following Books, the first six volumes of the Old Testament are now classed together, and generally known as the 'Hexateuch.'¹⁸³

While they were clearly explained, the sources J, E, P and D were generally not discussed in any detail in the popular material. Rather, the aim was to show the gradual progress of revelation through the accumulation of traditions linked closely to the history of God's chosen people. Adeney encouraged his readers to regard the Pentateuch as a great river, "the full flood of which is fed by many streams that have their courses far apart

from one another among the lonely hills."¹⁸⁴ The emphasis was on construction and synthesis rather than destruction and fragmentation. It was explained for example that primitive ballads passed on from parents to children formed parts of the Hexateuch, though the collections themselves, such as the Book of Jashar, had been lost. Primitive traditions, such as those found in the varying accounts of Genesis which "stare us in the face and which we cannot fail to detect once they have been pointed out," also made up the biblical record.¹⁸⁵ Finally there were the primitive laws which were supplemented as the centuries progressed, and which were edited in the time of Ezra.¹⁸⁶ Readers were assured that while there was no reason to deny that Moses left some laws, it had to be admitted that these were greatly enlarged and developed after his death. Yet as J.R. Cohu claimed, there was "no shadow of doubt" about whether or not Moses actually lived, though some events in his life were shrouded in myth.¹⁸⁷ Believers could safely regard him as a great leader who attempted to mitigate the clannishness of the tribes and develop in the people a sense of their dependence upon God. Though many of the laws concerning sacrificial rites, ceremonies and the priesthood did not originate with Moses, he did lay the foundations for much of the later civil and religious legislation of Israel in a simple version of the Decalogue.

The documentary growth of the Hexateuch was thus presented for popular consumption in the form of lists of

biblical passages on various topics which showed a movement from the earliest layer of material to the most recent. Edward Bradby, honorary canon of St. Alban's, published a simple compendium of the specific conclusions relating to the date, authorship and general character of the Old Testament books. The books were discussed in relative chronological order according to the "well established" discoveries of the critics. In the introduction Bradby provided the following account of the strata embedded in the Pentateuch:¹⁸⁸

The Ten "Words" of Moses beginning at Deuteronomy 4:14.

The Book of the Covenant concerned with a simple, agricultural population. (Exodus 20:22 to 23:33)

The narrative of past events and traditions gradually formed among the "Sons of the Prophets" and distinguished by the use of the name "Yahweh" or "The Lord".

A second set of laws designed for a more advanced and complex civilization in which the "high places" were abolished and the Levites brought to Jerusalem.

The narratives of past events and traditions concerning the patriarchal and Mosaic times as well as Joshua formed among priests and using the name "Elohim."

The "Book of the Law" discovered at the time of Josiah. (Deuteronomy 4:44 to 29:1 excepting chapter 28)

Deuteronomy and Joshua completed.

The groups of legislation from priestly circles.

Not only were readers supplied with the actual data of the documentary hypothesis, but they were also introduced to the critical process of judging the evidence for the new conclusions. As one popularizer requested, "I ask you to search for yourselves and see whether the evidence is there or not."¹⁸⁹ It was indeed emphasized that the critics worked with facts, some of which any thoughtful reader of the Bible could discover for himself. The chief instrument of the higher critic was the minute comparison of Scripture with Scripture.¹⁹⁰ He operated not on the basis of subjective "fancies" as to what was and was not rationally possible, but on grounds similar to those on which the best established theories of physical science rested. Like the theories of Copernicus and Newton, the documentary hypothesis' strongest justification was the number of facts which it explained.¹⁹¹

The facts demanding an explanation were not difficult for the average reader to detect. The same event for example was recorded twice, with variations. The Law forbade sacrifice save at a central sanctuary, yet all the early heroes and saints sacrificed freely. There were marked differences in style and outlook between certain narratives in the early books. It was difficult to believe that such intricate ritual as was found in Leviticus was the product of a nomad tribe.¹⁹² Wicksteed concluded on the critics' hypothesis, "I think you will admit already that it is the kind of evidence which, if it does exist, is such as a plain man may safely

rest his convictions upon."¹⁹³

There were several publications designed to present the text of the first five books of the Old Testament in their documentary divisions so that readers could clearly see the autonomy and characteristics of the ancient compilations. Buchanan Blake's book on Joseph and Moses aimed at illustrating the prophetic nature of the earlier literature of Genesis by separately presenting the Jahwist and Elohist accounts of the stories of Joseph and Moses. In the narratives were preserved certain spiritual truths, such as the precedent suffering must take over success, on which the later prophets built. In order to show this prophetic heritage, Blake printed separate accounts of the two oldest narratives representing the two sections of the divided Kingdom. He disregarded the third source in these cycles of stories primarily because the writer was not pre-eminently prophetic, dealing with genealogical tables and other details instead. Blake emphasized the fact that the anonymity of the authors did not rule against the veracity of their documents:

We may not know how to describe them worthily, and the names given by scholars for their own convenience, such as E, J, D or P, may very easily be made the object of cheap and unworthy ridicule. But even these names, to a reverent man, may be helpful and fraught with teaching. This, however, remains, that in the very anonymity of the writers we have the highest testimony borne to the essential and intrinsic worth of their teaching, and the grandest proof of the Inspiration of the Word, as being not of man, but of God.¹⁹⁴

J.E. McFadyen's Messages of the Prophetic and Priestly Historians served a similar need, presenting as it did "the writings of the historians of the Old Testament, arranged so as to distinguish their principal sources." The book contained a paraphrase of all the historical writings of the Old Testament from Genesis to Esther, divided into sections according to authors: the prophetic-historians whose work appeared in the Pentateuch (JE); the prophetic-priestly historians who adopted the philosophy of history advocated by the Deuteronomist in editing the books of Judges, Samuel and Kings, and finally the priestly historians (P). "The Messages of the Bible" series to which the volume belonged emphasized the devout and cautious spirit with which the project was proceeding:

Technicalities and unsettled questions will be, as far as possible, ignored. Each volume will be prepared by a leading specialist and will contain such brief introductions as serve to put the reader into intelligent relation to the general theme treated. The editorial arrangement of the order of the biblical books or sections will represent the definite results of sober scholarship.¹⁹⁵

The Guardian was thus led to state: "The work is not without its usefulness in showing how the history hangs together in each case, and what are the results arrived at by the critics; and for the spirit in which it is written we have nothing but praise."¹⁹⁶

One popular work recognized that the critical analysis of books such as those in the Pentateuch could be appreciated only if some steps were taken to graphically

represent the various sources.¹⁹⁷ This could be done with variations in type, by printing the documents separately, or by using a variety of colored backgrounds for the text. One introduction encouraged readers to wash-in the text from the various sources by means of water colors on the basis of the documentary analysis given.¹⁹⁸ This task however was already accomplished for readers in the famous Polychrome Bible, edited by Paul Haupt. The Bible featured an entirely new translation of the Hebrew text along with paragraph divisions of the text printed on colored backgrounds. Regarded by many conservative churchmen as the ultimate desecration of the Old Testament, the Bible did succeed in popularizing in a unique way the views of many scholars, including George Adam Smith, S.R. Driver and Bernhard Duhm. Peake made it plain that the work was expensive and that it went beyond the views generally accepted by moderate scholars; he nevertheless recommended it for use by his readers along with the Revised Version and the Variorum Bible.¹⁹⁹ The British Weekly, also on a positive note, concluded that,

In these busy days, even intelligent and devout Christians have little time or energy to spare for mastering new views about the Bible. These volumes show in the simplest and easiest fashion, the new fulness and clearness which recent research has shown in the Bible. Indeed, the books, once opened, fairly force their message on the reader.²⁰⁰

A careful examination of the Pentateuch thus led to the demise of traditional views and a new understanding

of the sources of the biblical material. The popular introductions however also focused on another aspect of Old Testament literature: prophecy. Again it was made clear that the critical theories were developed from a careful investigation into the biblical text. Again readers were acquainted with the fact that these theories overturned traditional opinion on the date and authorship of the prophetic books as well as on the nature of prophecy itself. Just as a literal interpretation of historical material had prevented a true appreciation of the Old Testament and encouraged skepticism, so the insistence upon the literal fulfilment of prophecies as proof of Scriptural inspiration was driving believers into an indefensible position. Popular introductions to biblical criticism therefore made a concerted effort to transform popular opinion on the role of the prophet and to instruct ordinary readers in the basic critical theories on the prophetic literature, particularly Isaiah and Daniel. "Prophecy," declared J.A. Beet,

becomes intelligible and helpful, in Old Testament and New Testament, if we keep in view the circumstances in which it was spoken and its moral purpose. It was given, not to gratify our curiosity about events still future, but to assert and emphasize the great moral principles which underlie God's administration of the world and will determine our destiny.²⁰¹

The pattern for studying the prophets had been altered significantly by the critical approach, and many popular publications focused on these changes before any critical theories were introduced. The method advocated

by Adeney involved first, the discovery of the historical meaning of the prophecy; secondly, an understanding of its universal spiritual application; and thirdly, an awareness of its realization in Jesus.²⁰² With regards to the last point, the popular works were quick to point out that a historical approach to prophecy did not rob the Old Testament of its value for Christians. Part of the prophetic message was indeed a hope for deliverance and good times, and the Messiah was a part of this; yet it was not the concrete details of the prophecies which Jesus fulfilled, for these bore relation only to the prophet's own historical situation. Rather, Jesus fulfilled the messianic ideas of the prophets; He developed the latent truths of the prophetic message to a degree never before imagined, even by the prophets themselves.

It was the first goal of placing the prophet in his own surroundings, however, which provoked a great deal of attention from the popularizers. John Page Hopps declared it a pity that the writings of the prophets were huddled together at the end of the Old Testament:

If ... these writings of the prophets could have been in some way linked with the historical books, a great deal of misapprehension would have been avoided. The effect produced by the present arrangement is almost as misleading as would be the placing at the end of a History of England a collection of extracts from sermons of Wycliffe, Luther, Calvin and George Fox.²⁰³

Buchanan Blake's series on How to Read the Prophets attempted to answer such a demand. The volume on Isaiah, described as a "capital text-book for the pastor or

Sunday School teacher," placed the words of the prophet in chapters 1 through 39 in chronological order with parallel passages from the historical books and a commentary.²⁰⁴ Blake, to the annoyance of some of his reviewers, adopted the cautious approach of assigning the whole of chapters 1 to 39 to Isaiah instead of following current scholarly opinion.²⁰⁵ Blake nevertheless contended that the best way to prevent a misunderstanding of the prophets was to collect and use the main results of the higher criticism:

These should be gathered together and placed before the ordinary reader in a plain, simple and untechnical manner. It is no help to them to set forth all the authorities for the general views adopted, or to give a list of various scholars who have so largely, and over a long course of years, advanced the land-marks of knowledge. The author would simply claim to have used for the benefit of others the materials lying to his own hand.²⁰⁶

With the idea of the composite authorship of the Pentateuch in the public eye, it was a natural step to suggest that the combination of the work of more than one writer was also not improbable in some of the prophetic books. It was, of course, true that the problem of plural authorship did not exist with some of the more significant prophets such as Jeremiah and Amos. Isaiah, however, was another matter, and it was the suggestion of at least dual authorship in Isaiah which the popular introductions most frequently focused upon. The conclusions of the higher critics on the literary structure of Isaiah were consistently and carefully set out for popular consumption.

It is worth quoting Bradby's introduction on this point:

This book, as we have it now, is the work of at least two authors of very different date. Roughly speaking, the first part is due to the great prophet of Judah, who is named in the heading Isaiah 1:1, and flourished about 750 to 710 B.C.; the second part, from chapter 40 onwards, to an unnamed writer of the time of Cyrus (BC 539). But, in the view of most critics, the division is not so simple as this; certain portions of the earliest part being also due to the later writer, and certain others to anonymous writers. The details of distribution may, in several cases, be doubtful, but the main distinction is not so.²⁰⁷

Though the conclusions reached by the critics on the prophetic books were given most attention, their methods for arriving at such were not ignored. Kirkpatrick, for example, proposed in his lectures to summarize the grounds upon which the theory of Second Isaiah was based, for those grounds appeared to him to be "entirely convincing and to offer one of the best examples of the methods and results of biblical criticism."²⁰⁸ Herbert Knight in his introduction also attempted to deal with the arguments upon which the Second Isaiah idea rested. Both authors, however, were not indiscriminate in their selection of material. Complicated linguistic and stylistic elements were mentioned but not examined in detail. Such elements were important in popular material really only insofar as they corroborated the argument based upon the historical framework which chapters 40 to 66 revealed.

By examining the biblical account with an open mind, one could easily see in these chapters that the author assumes Jerusalem to be in ruins and Israel in exile.

Yet deliverance appears to be at hand through the conquests of the Persian ruler Cyrus who was already extending his empire. The author of these chapters was clearly in touch with the feelings, the hopes and the fears of the exiles, and was most likely one of them himself. Thus the conclusion is reached that, "the whole argument of these chapters is incomprehensible, unless they were written subsequent to the time when the triumphant career of Cyrus had already begun."²⁰⁹ As Kirkpatrick claimed, the conclusions about Second Isaiah and a late date for Daniel rested upon no a priori arguments as to the impossibility of prophecy but rather upon simple inductions from the contents of the books.²¹⁰ The traditional view of the prophet as predicting the minute and distant future had to be transformed; what had to be seriously considered was what the prophetic material really said, and not what Bible readers over the centuries had thought it said.

The question of authorship was not confined to the Book of Isaiah. Daniel had traditionally been assigned to the fifth century B.C. and to a Jewish hero living in the Babylonian court of Nebuchadnezzar. It had, as a book of prophecies, a peculiar fascination for those seeking to understand contemporary political and social events and to make predictions about the Second Coming of Christ and the end of the world. It formed, throughout much of the nineteenth century, the basis for some very elaborate schemes of apocalyptic history. Those

writing popular introductions undoubtedly had this background in mind when they asserted that the visions of Daniel were not meant to yield tantalizing hints about the eschaton but were meant to encourage faithful Jews in a time of crisis.²¹¹ The most probable date for the book was 168 B.C., a time of persecution for the Jews under the tyrant Antiochus Epiphanes. Instead of originating at the time of the Captivity, the book took as its subject matter the fifth century figure Daniel and constructed a series of pious tales around him. Readers were encouraged to see that the author's concern for the future was in general religious terms based upon the belief that God's good will would always prevail.

i/ As in the case of Second Isaiah, the methods and arguments by which the late date of Daniel was reached were explained only on the most elementary terms. The introductions referred for example to the presence of Persian, Greek and Aramaic words which did not become part of the language spoken in Palestine until long after the Exile. Complicated linguistic arguments, however, were avoided. Historical difficulties and exaggerations such as the identification of the figures Darius and Belshazzar were also mentioned, though it is questionable whether such evidence had the same force for the ordinary reader as those supporting Second Isaiah.

At least some of the popularizers went a stage further in introducing the conclusions of higher criticism by

providing, with an emphasis on reconstruction, the application of those conclusions to the history and religion of Israel. Singled out for most comment were George Woosung Wade's Old Testament History and R.L. Ottley's Short History of the Hebrews, which was further popularized by Stitt's Old Testament History Analyzed. Ottley's work was significantly more popular in form than Wade's history, presenting as it did such aids as maps and chronological tables, brief descriptions of the nations with whom the Hebrews were brought into contact, and a continuous narrative of events. Yet of the two, the popular press tended to favor the conservatism of Wade over the apparent speculations of Ottley. The Guardian claimed that, "Besides the lack of any history of religious thought, and its development, there is throughout not nearly sufficient emphasis laid on the Divine side of the history and the way in which its whole course from the earliest days formed a preparation for the Incarnation."²¹² Troubled over Ottley's treatment of the patriarchal history, The Church Quarterly Review suggested, "Let scholars argue and dispute and investigate. Let theologians remind us that our faith will not be affected by such interpretations of Scripture if they were proved to be true. But meanwhile it would surely be enough in a text-book had such speculations found only a brief recognition in a footnote."²¹³

The documentary analysis could be taught in detail, and the modern view of prophecy propagated without much loss to the spiritual sense, but the application of

higher critical methods to the history of Israel as a whole was indeed treading upon sensitive ground. Israel had always been regarded as the elect of God for a divine purpose, but modern studies on history and criticism had shown the history of the nation to be very different from conventional ideas. Despite varying emphases on the role of the divine in history and the veracity of the Genesis material, both G.W. Wade and R.L. Ottley produced works which marked a departure from the text-books commonly in use. It was agreed, for example, that events before the time of Samuel were often shrouded in mystery. While the general outline of occasions such as the Exodus may be true, it was unwise to devote a disproportionate amount of space to elaborate speculations about the precise course of history, or minute details about the circumstances of everyday life.²¹⁴ Events purporting to be miraculous also betrayed the approach of modern scholarship:

They [the Israelites] obtained some relief, however, by falling in with flights of quails, birds which Josephus describes as more plentiful on the Arabian Gulf than anywhere else, and which are still numerous in the peninsula and the neighbouring countries of Palestine and Syria. In their need they also became acquainted with, and utilised food, manna, a substance hitherto strange to them, which exudes from the branches of the tamarisk and a few other shrubs when punctured by insects.²¹⁵

G. B. Gray's Divine Discipline of Israel went even further in applying the raw materials of criticism. The author made it clear that he did not intend to prove the facts of Israel's history as discerned by the critics

but only to interpret them.²¹⁶ The critics and students of comparative religion had made it impossible to believe in Israel's peculiar task as preserving an account of the origin and history of the world, yet few would deny the supreme role of the nation in world affairs. For Gray, the "divine discipline" of Israel could be seen in the growth of monotheism through the efforts of Elijah, the prophets, the Deuteronomic writers and finally Ezra. Thus the modern reconstruction of Israel's story in many respects increased rather than diminished the evidence for divine guidance.²¹⁷

The tools to aid laymen in an intelligent study of the Bible became increasingly abundant towards the end of the century. Smith's Dictionary of the Bible had in 1863 provided interested clergymen and church members with an "intermediate stage" between orthodoxy and the views of the critics.²¹⁸ The Dictionary did allow that the Flood of Genesis was confined to the Euphrates Valley, that the Pentateuch did not attain its present stage until after the Exile, and that Genesis was compiled from several older documents by a single editor. Jonah however was upheld as historical truth and Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers were regarded as largely Mosaic in origin. Momerie in fact once complained that the editor had failed to teach in an unprejudiced manner the people committed to his charge by twice refusing to include a heterodox article on the Flood.²¹⁹

Hastings' Dictionary however went a long way towards accepting the assured results of the critics. Here the

labor of the many specialists in biblical studies was brought together in "a work of remarkable fulness, well up to date, and yet at the same time conservative in its general tendency."²²⁰ Life and Work complained that some of the articles over-stepped the limits prescribed by the facts in order to buttress a novel theory, but the Dictionary generally received acclaim as being simple and showing sober good sense. Driver's conclusions predominated in those sections where historicity was a question, such as in Ryle's article on "Abraham." There it was claimed that while the acceptance of a "uniform literal historicity" for the narrative was no longer possible, it could not be denied that in Abraham men had "the great leader of a racial movement, and one who left his mark upon his fellow-tribesmen, not only by the eminence of his superior gifts, but by the distinctive features of his religious life..."²²¹

This chapter on the popularization of biblical criticism cannot close without mention of two widely known and highly recommended series of commentaries published on the books of the Bible. Laymen may have been interested in buying and reading books such as Talbot's work on the results of criticism or Wade's Old Testament history, but they were most certainly attracted to and made aware of Dent's Temple Bible and The Century Bible, published by Caxton's and edited by the scholar and critic W.F. Adeney. Originally intended as a sequel to the Temple Shakespeare, the Temple Bible series encouraged

the public to read the Bible as literature by printing the sacred books "with the care and the art which today are lavished upon even the least expensive reprints of the great writers."²²² A "finely executed" frontispiece, a text printed in good clear type without verse divisions, the printing of poetry as poetry and marginal analyses at the head of each page were all acclaimed as outstanding features of the series.²²³ Most alluring of all however were the leather bindings of the early volumes in the series, evoking the criticism that half the charm of the Temple Bible lay in its "get-up", and that the series was "more advanced than read."²²⁴

Significant about this obviously popular series was that the notes dealing with the genuineness of the books and their dates, while devout, nevertheless took account of extreme critical positions. The standpoint of the volumes themselves was described as "unbiased, scholarly, and liberal," one which "marks a notable departure in intelligent Bible study, which, properly accepted, will not only conserve, but make stronger, Christian faith that, for lack of knowledge, might falter."²²⁵ Archibald Sayce, with his profound antagonism to higher criticism but with his considerable knowledge of oriental studies, edited the volume on Genesis, earning for it the reputation of being "generally unsatisfactory" in the light of later and bolder volumes.²²⁶ The volume on Exodus no doubt confused readers by flatly contradicting the first commentary by Sayce. It not only repudiated

the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, but regarded it as having come into being through a wholly different set of causes. The Expository Times was prepared to declare that, "The difference between the first two volumes of this beautiful edition of the Bible may fairly be counted a gain and not a loss, at least by those who do not consider the problem of the authorship of the Pentateuch quite settled yet."²²⁷ One of the last tasks of the scholar A.B. Davidson was the completion of the volume on Isaiah in which the theories of T.K. Cheyne were reviewed. Likewise, the introduction to Deuteronomy was described as practically a summary of Driver's views. In spite of all such efforts to get the public to appreciate a literary view of the Bible, however, the Temple series was admitted to be only a "moderate success" by publisher J.M. Dent: "I am afraid that the use of the Bible as a book of doctrine or a book only of sacred and inspired truth...has blinded men's eyes to its supreme value as literature."²²⁸

The Century Bible enjoyed considerably more success, as constant recommendations to its volumes indicate. It was praised as meeting a distinct need for popular biblical scholarship in a wholly adequate manner. The British Weekly declared that, "It touches the high-water mark of popularised biblical scholarship and of book production. In every respect it may be spoken of in terms of unqualified praise."²²⁹ An advertisement in the publishers' column of The British Weekly summarized

the salient features of the series:²³⁰

DO YOU

wish to be informed on the
latest standpoints of Bible
Critics?

Send for the prospectus of

THE
CENTURY BIBLE

an
up-to-date
commentary
in popular
language
by
eminent writers
in handy volumes
at a low price

Certainly its treatment of Genesis was more in keeping with the hopes of liberal churchmen. A clear and full statement of the documentary sources of the book was given as well as certain comparative tables to aid the reader in discerning these sources for himself. Bennett avoided confusing his readers with an unduly minute analysis, and he refused to propound critical conclusions where he believed there was room for doubt. A review of the volume declared that,

Dr. Bennett is a typical scholar of the new generation. He is critical and he is reverent. He fears no tendencies, for he has found that the tendency is to Christ. His Introduction says good-bye forever to the old unhistoric methods of Bible interpretation.²³¹

Another important volume in the series, so far as the popularizing of criticism was concerned, was that edited by O.C. Whitehouse on Isaiah. Thorough in his critical studies for popular consumption, Whitehouse accepted the conclusion of the radical critics Duhm and Cheyne that Second Isaiah finished at chapter 55, but continued to hold that the four Servant poems were the work of the prophet of the Exile. More important for his readers however was the comprehensive account Whitehouse gave of the prophet's historical conditions. The Primitive Methodist Quarterly Review concluded: "We have no hesitation in describing this volume as the best and most useful introduction to the subject accessible to English readers."²³²

The productions of such collections as the Temple Bible and The Century Bible illustrates the progress which was being made in popularizing higher criticism. Another indication of changing attitudes is seen in Helps to the Study of the Bible, published by Oxford University Press. The book upheld traditional views for the most part, but compared to previous editions, that of 1893 was void of rash assertions against criticism and indeed made remarkable concessions to the new views. Also, the critical conclusions were seriously set before readers who were encouraged to pass judgment upon them. The Guardian commented upon the guiding hand behind the Helps by saying, "Apparently Dr. Maclear does not feel so confident as his predecessors did that the criticism of the present day is

altogether baseless. At any rate, he has wisely expunged some of the sweeping and hasty statements which disfigured the pages of previous editions."²³³ On the Creation for example it was asserted: "With regard to the history of the Creation the record was not intended to be scientific. The facts are related in language adapted to the childhood of the world."²³⁴ On Isaiah it was commented that many modern scholars believed Isaiah could not have written the last twenty-seven chapters on the grounds of style and apparent historical circumstances. The Second Isaiah hypothesis, while rejected, was conveyed accurately and left as an option for readers to consider.

The popular Cambridge Companion to the Bible was less conservative, representing the scholarship of men such as Robertson Smith and Herbert Ryle. Again The Guardian commented: "Of late years we have been accustomed to associate 'critical' views of the composition of the Old Testament with the Oxford school of the Hebraists, but... it impossible to help being struck by the fact that such views are more fully adopted in that which comes from Cambridge."²³⁵ The Church Times indeed regretted the somewhat dogmatic way in which the Companion set out critical theories on the origin of the Old Testament.²³⁶ The four documents composing the Hexateuch for example were discussed in an untechnical but confident manner in J.J.S. Perowne's contribution.²³⁷ On Jonah it was concluded: "It is disputed how far the narrative reposes

on actual historical events..."²³⁸ On the whole however it was the moderate views of criticism which were propagated but not intruded, and in deference to the state of flux biblical scholars found themselves in, the conclusion that "opinions differ" was frequently resorted to, the reader being left to decide for himself.²³⁹

It was clear by the early years of the twentieth century that a significant number of churchmen felt comfortable enough with modern scholarship to popularize certain of its principles. Many books, articles, lectures - and some sermons - focused on the nature, conclusions and constructive aspects of the higher criticism. It is unlikely that any but the most diligent laymen clearly understood the more complex formulas of literary criticism or the true nature of Hebrew mythology. But there were certain principles propagated which doubtlessly effected some change in prevailing attitudes towards the Bible. Accepted for example as the necessary postulate of any biblical study was the principle of free inquiry, "untrammelled by any preconceived doctrine of 'inspiration', or any theories concerning what 'revelation' ought to contain."²⁴⁰ Traditional views as to the date and authorship of the Law, Prophets and Psalms were viewed as requiring some, if not considerable, modification. It was realized that the principle of compilation was the rule rather than the exception in the composition of the Old Testament, and also that the work of "editing" was considerably

more extensive than previously supposed. Finally it was accepted that the category of the supernatural, while not denied, had to be cautiously applied.

Most of the material in which these principles were developed presumed a certain degree of literary and intelligence as well as interest. The pulpit therefore appeared to some churchmen to be a more logical place from which to popularize the new criticism. The drawbacks of such a strategy however were also clearly recognized. A historical approach to the Old Testament was in the minds of many preachers as they researched sermon texts each week, but they were also constantly made aware of George Adam Smith's dictum that: "In the classroom and the library, not in the pulpit. I always warn my students of that. They must not come into the pulpit reeking with criticism: a child that smells soapy is not clean."²⁴¹ Many churchmen therefore looked to the classroom as the most fertile soil for popularizing the higher criticism. "The teacher," claimed McFadyen, "is justified in endeavouring to initiate his students into the processes by which he builds...But the preacher... is to ignore these processes in his public work."²⁴² By teacher, McFadyen meant not only those employed in the halls of divinity, but also in the Bible classes for young adults and the day school classes of the Board and denominational schools. Higher criticism and the teaching of the young was a source of great hope - and distress - to believers at the turn of the century.

Notes to Chapter II

¹Altick claims that the three great requisites for a mass reading public - literacy, leisure and a little pocket-money - were present between 1860 and 1890. In spite of periods of depression and a constantly disadvantaged working class, the period was one of "remarkable economic progress". Wages rose and prices fell, so that during the second half of the century the average family's real income rose by 70 or 80 percent. The average income of a lower middle class family rose to 110 in 1881 while the number of families earning between 150 and 400 increased to nearly 300,000 by that year. Book prices continued to decline so that books such as the popular religious works in the 3s. to 6s. category were not out of the reach of many people. The popular 6d. pamphlets used in the debate over biblical criticism were likely to have reached an even wider audience. (Richard Altick, The English Common Reader (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), p. 306.)

²The Bible from the Standpoint of the Higher Criticism (London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1904), pp. vi-vii.

³Modern Views of the Bible (London: John Ouseley, 1911), p. xiii.

⁴How to Read the Bible (London: Independent Press, 1897), pp. 67-68.

⁵Messages from the Old Testament (London: Wells, Gardner, Darton, 1904), p. 2.

⁶*Ibid.*, p. v.

⁷(London: Sampson Low, Marston, 1894), p. 30.

⁸Christian World Pulpit, January 10, 1872, p. 155.

⁹Charles F. Kent, The Origin and Permanent Value of the Old Testament (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1906), p. v.

¹⁰How God Inspired the Bible (London: Samuel Bagster, 1886), p. 2.

¹¹The Expository Times, January, 1904, p. 161.

¹²Howard A. Johnston, Biblical Criticism and the Average Man (London: Fleming H. Revell, 1902), p. 21.

- ¹³ Bertram Talbot, Information Concerning the History and Growth of the Bible (London: Elliot Stock, 1901), p. 5. Books about which Talbot was complaining may have included such works as W.H. Bennett's Biblical Introduction to the Old Testament. This was designed as a handbook on Old Testament criticism for those only "slightly acquainted" with the new biblical studies. It was however very lengthy and detailed, suiting students more than laymen and church teachers. Also recommended to laymen but of questionable service were books such as B.H. Alford's Old Testament History and Literature as well as John J. Lias' Principles of Biblical Criticism.
- ¹⁴ Talbot, Information Concerning the History and Growth of the Bible, p. 6.
- ¹⁵ Herbert T. Knight, Criticism and the Old Testament (London: Elliot Stock, 1906), p. x.
- ¹⁶ J. Agar Beet, A Key to Unlock the Bible (London: Religious Tract Society, 1901), p. 10.
- ¹⁷ George A. Cooke, The Progress of Revelation: Sermons Chiefly on the Old Testament (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1910), p. 66.
- ¹⁸ Stopford Brooke, The Old Testament and Modern Life (London: Ibister, 1896), p. 16.
- ¹⁹ A Key to Unlock the Bible, preface.
- ²⁰ E.J. Hardy, "Bible Difficulties," Christian World Pulpit, August 9, 1899, p. 85.
- ²¹ William Sanday, The Oracles of God (London: Longmans, Green, 1905), pp. 1-3; Walter F. Adeney, The Construction of the Bible (London: Sunday School Union, 1897), p. 6.
- ²² Ellis, Modern Views of the Bible, p. 19.
- ²³ The Divine Library of the Old Testament (London: Macmillan, 1891), p. 3.
- ²⁴ Modern Views of the Bible, p. 18.
- ²⁵ Kirkpatrick, The Divine Library of the Old Testament, lecture III.

- 26 The Old Documents and the New Bible (London: Samuel Bagster, 1890), p. 22.
- 27 Adeney, How to Read the Bible, p. 15.
- 28 T.K. Cheyne, et al, eds., The Variorum Teacher's Edition of the Holy Bible...with Various Renderings and Readings from the best Authorities (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1881), p. iii.
- 29 How to Read the Bible, p. 17.
- 30 The Oracles of God, pp. 30-31.
- 31 William H. Bennett and Walter F. Adeney, The Bible and Criticism (London: T.C. & E.C. Jack, 1912), p. vii; N.H. Marshall, "Jesus and the Bible," Christian World Pulpit, November 16, 1910, p. 315; Smyth, How God Inspired the Bible, pp. 190-193.
- 32 Bennett and Adeney, The Bible and Criticism, p. viii.
- 33 February 24, 1893, p. 88.
- 34 "The improver of natural knowledge," claimed Huxley, "absolutely refuses to acknowledge authority as such... The man of science has learned to believe in justification not by faith, but by verification." Such was the message of certain popular essays. The new periodicals and newspapers facilitated the general spread of knowledge and discussion. As early as 1831 Mill could report that "men may not reason better concerning the great questions in which human nature is interested, but they reason more. Large subjects and discussed more, and longer, and by more minds". (W. Houghton, The Victorian Frame of Mind, p. 95.)
- 35 How God Inspired the Bible, p. 191.
- 36 Robert Rainy, The Bible and Criticism (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1878).
- 37 Ibid., pp. 21-22.
- 38 Smyth, How God Inspired the Bible, p. 194.

- ³⁹John R. Coahu, The Old Testament in the Light of Modern Research (Oxford: J. Parker, 1908), pp. 86-88; Balmforth, The Bible from the Standpoint of the Higher Criticism, p. 42.
- ⁴⁰James Candlish, The Authority of Scripture Independent of Criticism (Edinburgh: A. & C. Black, 1877), p. 5. Candlish claimed that those who advocated a literal interpretation of the Scriptures were themselves rationalistic, for they assumed that men were able to judge antecedently what a revelation from God would be. And rationalism of this type, he went on to say, expressed itself in religious dogmatism. Just as many rationalists erred in saying that there could be no violation in the order of nature, so many Christians erred in dogmatically asserting that the Bible was written in a particular way. "Rather," he concluded, "let us occupy the humbler but far safer position of true faith, that we are sure that the Bible is divine because of its self-evidencing light and power, and are ready to learn from it in what manner God has been pleased to make known His will for our salvation." (Ibid., pp. 4-5.)
- ⁴¹Ibid., p. 5.
- ⁴²Beet, A Key to Unlock the Bible, p. 154.
- ⁴³Modern Views of the Bible, p. 7.
- ⁴⁴Hardy, "Bible Difficulties," p. 83.
- ⁴⁵The Divine Library of the Old Testament, p. 3. A similar idea is also expressed in B.J. Snell, The Value of the Old Testament (London: James Clarke, 1908), pp. 24-25.
- ⁴⁶William H. Bennett in Faith and Criticism: Essays by Congregationalists (London: Sampson, Low, Marston, 1893), p. 26.
- ⁴⁷I Kings 16: 23-27; John P.S.R. Gibson, New Wicks for Old Lamps (London: The Christian Literature Society for India, 1910), p. 10 .
- ⁴⁸October 5, 1900, p. 1387.
- ⁴⁹Henry Ward Beecher, Bible Studies: Sunday Evening Sermons on the Early Books of the Old Testament, John R. Howard, ed. (London: R.D. Dickinson, 1893), p. 20

- ⁵⁰Cooke, The Progress of Revelation, p. 18.
- ⁵¹The Authority of Scripture Independent of Criticism, p. 12.
- ⁵²Modern Views of the Bible, p. 23.
- ⁵³Thomas G. Selby, The God of the Patriarchs (London: Horace Marshall, 1904), pp. 61-62.
- ⁵⁴Kirkpatrick, The Divine Library of the Old Testament, pp. 85-86.
- ⁵⁵Cooke, The Progress of Revelation, p. 71.
- ⁵⁶Selby, The God of the Patriarchs, p. 27.
- ⁵⁷The Divine Library of the Old Testament, pp. 135-155.
- ⁵⁸The Old Testament in the Light of Modern Research, p. 27.
- ⁵⁹*Ibid.*, p. 40.
- ⁶⁰Leslie Stephen, A History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century, vol. I (New York: G. Putnam's Sons, 1881, 2nd ed.), p. 192.
- ⁶¹Cohu, The Old Testament in the Light of Modern Research, p. 289.
- ⁶²The Hallowing of Criticism: Nine Sermons on Elijah (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1888), p. 171.
- ⁶³Gibson, New Wicks for Old Lamps, p. 12.
- ⁶⁴See page 204ff.
- ⁶⁵See for example Selby, The God of the Patriarchs, p. 28.
- ⁶⁶Robert Davey, "The Biblical Account of Creation," April 14, 1886, p. 230.
- ⁶⁷The God of the Patriarchs, p. 139.
- ⁶⁸New Wicks for Old Lamps, p. 22.

- ⁶⁹Selby, The God of the Patriarchs, p. 52.
- ⁷⁰See Walter A. Moberly, The Old Testament in Modern Light (London: S.P.C.K., 1906), pp. 76-77 and also Cohu, The Old Testament in the Light of Modern Research, pp. 142-143.
- ⁷¹The Hebrews wished for example to find an explanation for not eating a certain sinew, so the story of Jacob wrestling with the angel was invented.
- ⁷²Moberly, The Old Testament in Modern Light, p. 77.
- ⁷³Cohu, The Old Testament in the Light of Modern Research, p. 144.
- ⁷⁴(London: Methuen, 1901), p. 182.
- ⁷⁵Inspiration and the Bible (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1889, 4th ed.), p. 132.
- ⁷⁶P.T. Marsh, The Victorian Church in Decline (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969), pp. 51-58.
- ⁷⁷Brownlow Maitland, The Argument from Prophecy (London: S.P.C.K., 1889, 3rd ed.), p. vi.
- ⁷⁸*Ibid.*, p. 36.
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An anonymous letter warned a young clergyman against the blatant preaching of the higher criticism, citing the disastrous effect it was having on many of the faithful in his congregation: "The Twenty-third Psalm used to be a green pasture, but now you have turned it into an opportunity for drawing a parallel between David and Robin Hood, with the view of showing the improbability of the Book of Psalms coming from a bandit. The very name of Isaiah makes the pews to tremble, for you began with two prophets and now no one can calculate the number of anonymous writers that have gone to complete the book. And I think you yourself felt afterwards that it was a mistake to take the 53rd of Isaiah for a sermon on Good Friday, and discuss the identity of the Servant of the Lord for forty minutes, with only a casual reference to Christ. One may not be an obscurantist, and yet be a little weary of his pedantry." (John Watson et al, The Clerical Life: A Series of Letters to Ministers (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1898), p. 110.)

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Chapter III
THE HIGHER CRITICISM
AND
THE EDUCATION OF THE YOUNG

One aspect of the popularization process indicative of how ordinary clergymen and laymen felt about the higher criticism was the willingness with which they taught a critical approach to the Bible to their children and young people. It was in fact in the Sunday school and day school classrooms that men supposed the higher criticism could do its best - or its worst. A surprising number of influential Christians believed that some form of critical teaching could fight the rampant skepticism of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The books and lesson plans which they produced bear witness to this conviction. They were however going against a tide of traditional Bible teaching which was in sympathy not only with biblical literalism but with the still dominant educational philosophy of an earlier era. The classroom had always been the bulwark of orthodoxy regardless of the vicissitudes of academic opinion. To introduce the higher criticism into school teaching not only posed real practical problems for teachers and educators; it threatened to give young souls the stone of skepticism

in place of the bread of life.

Traditional Bible Teaching

The work of educating people on a large scale was undertaken in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries primarily by private persons and privately initiated societies in order to remove ignorance, advance morals and disseminate religious knowledge. In most of the schools so established, the teaching of the Bible occupied a prominent if not exclusive place in the curriculum. True to the Protestant view of the Bible and its relation to the individual, schools of every denomination taught reading so that the Word of God could be read. Their policies were encouraged by the efforts of the religious societies to produce large quantities of Bibles at low prices. The Mendip schools of Hannah and Martha More for example used the Bible as a child's primer and reading book, as did the schools of the National School Society and the British and Foreign School Society. With attention focused on the Bible by teachers who held certain views on the Scriptures, it was therefore inevitable that certain patterns of instruction should emerge and endure so long as an authoritative and infallible Bible was accepted.

The regenerative effect which the biblical words and phrases were said to possess reduced Bible reading

to a mechanical process devoid of any in-depth comprehension. Especially where an evangelical influence was present, Bible reading was practiced less as a conscious exercise of the intellect than as a ritual which was an end in itself. "In charitable activities...they contented themselves in spreading the barest rudiments of reading among the masses. One who knew his letters, regardless of any further education, was sufficiently equipped to perform the sacred rite which lay at the very heart of religion."¹ Actual comprehension of the material was not important; the grace of God could descend upon the reader so long as he was able to pronounce most of the words he looked upon. Scripture reading, so much a part of the evangelical life-style, became in many schools an exercise of stringing together syllables and words.

The regenerative nature of the biblical material was also partially responsible for the heavy emphasis placed on memorizing certain passages. In Hannah More's schools the first three chapters of Genesis were memorized by the pupils along with Isaiah 9, Psalm 2, the Sermon on the Mount and chapters from the Gospel of St. John.² In many similar schools the chief task of the pupils was the repetition of memory verses.

What was chosen for reading or memorization was not usually part of a carefully designed scheme. Most teachers were left to their own devices, and the most common plan, therefore, was to begin at Genesis and read

through the books of the Bible as they stood. At least in the Sunday schools, however, the chief aim was to convict the pupil of sin and to awaken trust in Christ as Savior. The course of study from Scripture, therefore, was aimed at providing opportunities for doctrinal teaching. Glasgow Sabbath School Union for example published a doctrinal lesson scheme in 1846 recommending certain portions of the Bible be committed to memory. The lessons began with the theme, "Man is a Lost and Helpless Sinner", and ended with "Christ will judge the world."³

A verbally infallible Bible was true in fact of history and geography, and so provided an abundant store from which teacher and examiner alike could draw. Especially with the development of exploration and archaeology and the rise of interest in Jewish life and customs, the instruction on the Bible became pre-occupied with the memorization and repetition of lists of facts. The historical books were emphasized at the expense of the prophetic literature. Facts of history, geography and genealogy were poured into pupils with little concern for either context or comprehension. The names of the twelve Apostles, the tribes of Israel and the succession of kings in Israel were favorite classroom topics. Charles L. Marson, in a celebrated pamphlet entitled Huppim and Muppim, asked later in the century what the numerous children who had sat through religious education had learned:

These children can tell you who Huppim and Muppim and Ard were; they know the latitude of Beersheba, Kirioth and Beth-Gamul; ...they can name the destructive miracles, the parables peculiar to St. Luke, and above all, they have a masterly knowledge of St. Paul's second missionary journey. They are well-loaded and ballasted with chronicles of Baasha and Zimri, Methuselah and Alexander the Coppersmith. This may be valuable as historical, geographical, critical and topographical or memorial education, but it can hardly be called religious education.⁴

This is not to say that the prophetic material was completely neglected. As miracles and prophecy were seen as the most important attestations to the divine nature of biblical revelation, the lessons tended to focus on the books as catalogues from which to draw detailed lists of prophetic fulfilment. Flavel S. Cook published a volume for the teachers of Sunday school and Bible classes in which lessons with readings were given on the "Prophecies concerning Our Lord and their Fulfilment".⁵ The Monthly Paper of Sunday Teaching, designed "to provide most lessons of a child's ordinary Sunday School career", focused a number of issues on the "types" of the Old Testament which were shadows of good things to come. Children were given long lists of quotations on a particular theme from the Old and New Testaments.⁶ Lists of introductory questions intended to convey to pupils the character of biblical prophecy were also published along with formal answers to be repeated by the children.⁷

Question: What is the meaning of the word "prophet"?

Answer: One who is inspired by God to foretell future events.

Question: When did Isaiah flourish?

Answer: About 700 B.C.

Question: What did he prophesy of Christ?

Answer: His wondrous birth, miracles, character, rejection, sufferings, death, burial, resurrection and final glory.

Question: What other prophecies did he utter?

Answer: He foretold the captivities of Judah, and Israel, the destruction of Babylon, Tyre, Damascus and Egypt - and the conquest and conduct of Cyrus.

Because of increasingly low prices and availability, and the deliberate policies of educational societies, the Bible continued throughout the century to be used as a textbook for subjects other than religious education. Up until 1839 it was the official policy of the British and Foreign School Society to use the Bible only as a classroom text; a similar policy was followed by the rival National Society in the early decades of the century. Yet even after official opinion was changed, the Bible still continued to occupy an important position in the ranks of favored textbooks. As a result, the Old Testament especially became the vehicle for all manner of extraneous information, and additional emphasis was placed on the factual contents of biblical instruction. To teach arithmetic, for example, the Bible posed the following problems for the pupil:⁸

Mesha, the king of Moab, was a sheep-master, and rendered unto the king of Israel 10,000 lambs ... Write down the number.

At the marriage in Cana in Galilee there were six water-pots of stone, holding two or three firkins a piece. If they held two firkins,

how much water would it take to fill them?
And how much if they held three each?

Our Lord showed himself to the Apostles forty days after his passion. For how many weeks was he seen?

Pupils were instructed in geography and spelling as well as in arithmetic on the basis of the Bible. Its value as a map of the far-flung empires of the world was beyond dispute. Even after additional books penetrated the classroom, the Bible remained a chief source of inspiration for potential geographers. Books such as Mrs. Sherwood's Geography, a classic text among elementary school teachers, provided appropriate biblical texts along with the discussion of items of geographical interest. Infants in many schools were taught the alphabet through the use of rhymes such as:⁹

G is for Goshen, a rich and good land;

H is for Horeb where Moses did stand.

Those students of the day who were able to participate in education at a higher or secondary level did not escape the mechanical study of the Bible for the realms of exposition and discussion. The Bible in higher education was used primarily as a collection of books supporting church dogma and as a tool for instruction in the classical languages. In 1802, in defending the system of religious instruction in public education, William Vincent described the practice as it then existed at Winchester. In the Lower School the boys read Psalms and Gospels in Latin along with memorizing the Catechism.

Both the Lower and Upper Schools used the Sacred Exercises in Four Books, a collection of biblical passages illustrating the Christian virtues with appropriate prayers. The Upper School read selections from the English Bible, the Greek Testament and the Hebrew Psalter.¹⁰

The utilitarian view of education did little to alter and much to support the customary approach to biblical instruction. Dominating educational practice in the nineteenth century was a mechanistic "mug and jug" psychology which sought to pour facts into a pupil's mind.¹¹ Education was something imposed upon an individual from without in order to mould him to conform to certain established standards. According to Mill's notion of education for example, the child began life with a "tabula rasa" and was determined as a person by the ideas which flowed into him. The business of the teacher was to methodize instruction so that knowledge could be acquired as surely and economically as possible. Emphasis was laid on the printed page and on the memorization of material. The child was treated as a miniature adult, the only grading of lessons being done in terms of length.

The utilitarian philosophy was incorporated into the sophisticated system of Bell and Lancaster, popularized by the National School Society and the British and Foreign School Society. In such schools, one sole monitor taught a number of monitors who then passed on the instruction received to their schoolfellows. The

system met a number of practical needs, mainly that posed by the shortage of teachers and the vast number of children to be taught, but it led at the same time to a mechanical type of teaching. This was regarded by contemporaries as more of a virtue than a defect, as one educator boasted that, "The principle in schools and manufactories is the same."¹² Yet teachers were not concerned with how much material pupils assimilated, but only with whether or not they could repeat their lessons correctly. Reading meant an oral stringing together of words and syllables, and the only permissible questions were predesigned ones from standard books.

Bible teaching throughout the century inevitably continued to be affected by the utilitarian methods of the mutual schools. The teaching of Bible facts increasingly dominated the lessons, a procedure which became more and more attractive as the problem of biblical interpretation became more and more complicated. Young children continued to be taught the same biblical and theological material as adults. William Smith's Student Scripture History was specifically intended for use in schools and Bible classes as well as for general readers.¹³ Here was found in abbreviated form lessons which duplicated the contents of many more scholarly works: Hebrew names, biblical chronology, the names of the judges as well as the kings of Israel and Judah, the days and months of the Jewish year, and ex-

tensive tables in ancient weights, measures and currencies. Clearly the duration of the lessons and not the actual content was altered in this version designed for young people.

Suggested reforms in the prevailing patterns of instruction met with little favor. Reformers such as Froebel, Pestalozzi and Herbart attempted to conform the educational process to the needs and developmental stages of the child. It was only very late in the nineteenth century, however, that their disciples made any noticeable progress. More important, however, was the strength of orthodox opinion on the truth and authority of the Scriptures. The classroom was the stronghold of traditionalism, for at stake, so it seemed to many, was the entire moral fabric of society. Infidelity in the teaching of the young was unthinkable, a fact witnessed to by the outrage over headmaster Frederick Temple's contribution to Essays and Reviews. The Bible had to be taught as a document true in fact, at once infallible and authoritative, the basis indeed for the entire edifice of the Christian faith. Yet changes in the way the Bible was presented in the classroom were urgently advocated by not a few churchmen concerned to preserve this same edifice.

The year 1870 marked the beginning of a new era for the educational system in Great Britain. The Education Act established certain principles which in the following decades created a climate of intense discussion over

religious education and particularly the role of the Bible in the schools. While conventional views of the Scriptures continued to dominate the religious instruction of the day, skepticism was becoming a force to be reckoned with even among the offspring of traditionally religious backgrounds. At the same time the psychological movement of educational reform was gathering an increasing number of adherents. Coinciding with this era of educational change was the period in which the higher criticism was assimilated and disseminated among adult believers in Britain. These factors were largely responsible for the significant effort which was made to introduce the fruits of modern biblical scholarship into the instruction of the young. Dissatisfaction with religious education conducted along traditional lines as well as a desire to "vaccinate the young with criticism in order to save them from the smallpox of skepticism" led to the publication of numerous books and articles to aid in teaching the Bible from a critical point of view.¹⁴

The Education Act of 1870 and "Simple Bible Teaching"

The Education Act of 1870 created a national system of elementary education in England and Wales. Designed to favor neither the voluntary system nor a totally state-supported system, the Act took the via media by grafting Board Schools on to the existing system of

denominational schools. It has been called a product of the Victorian mind, a mind which had "come to accept state action as inevitable, but had done so cautiously and reluctantly."¹⁵

In the government's bill published in February, 1870, the voluntary bodies were to be given one year's grace in order to bring their institutions up to certain standards. If these were not met, the newly created School Boards were to assume responsibility for the schools, as they were to do in areas where voluntary schools were non-existent. The School Boards, appointed by either the town councils or parish vestries, were given complete control over the religious instruction in the rate-aided schools. Thus, public money could in theory have supported secular, denominational or non-denominational teaching. The controversy which ensued was furious. Protest came from Anglicans, Nonconformists, and Radicals alike, evoking a response from the government in June in the form of the Cowper-Temple amendment.

Public opinion had clearly been against both a completely secular system of education involving no religious instruction and a system in which everyone's religion could be taught at public expense. The government therefore chose the only available alternative - non-denominational religious instruction. The Cowper-Temple amendment allowed for only non-denominational teaching in the Board Schools, and compelled no religious teaching. Rate-aided schools were thus prohibited, in the words of

the bill, from using any "catechism or religious formularies distinctive of any particular denomination."¹⁶ Further stipulations were made with regards to religious instruction in both Board and denominational schools: a child's attendance was left to the discretion of the parents and the lessons themselves were to be conducted at the beginning and/or close of the day, making absenteeism less conspicuous. The bill along with other modifications was passed in August, 1870.¹⁷

What was not clear either to those who drafted or to those who implemented the Act was exactly what form "non-denominational" religious teaching should assume. This ambiguity was expressed by Gladstone in the following statement defending the amended bill:

We do not know what, in the language of the law, undenominational and unsectarian instruction mean...But we know perfectly well that practical judgment and the spirit of Christianity, combined with common sense, may succeed and does succeed in the vast number of cases.¹⁸

The campaign to maintain religious education in the Board Schools was fought nonetheless on the grounds that the teaching of the Bible was an essential part of the education of British children. Clearly the Bible was to be retained and taught as part of the national heritage. Forster claimed that the vast majority of parents wanted some kind of Christian training for their children, and this inevitably entailed the teaching of the Bible. "Would it not be a monstrous thing," Forster asked, "that the book which, after all, is the

foundation of the religion we possess, should be the only book that was not allowed to be used in our schools?"¹⁹ Canon Hensley Henson claimed that what was needed in national life was a manual of "fundamental Christianity." In a climate of controversy this was a difficult goal to realize. Yet he urged upon his readers the idea that, "We possess in the Bible and therein principally in the New Testament, precisely what is wanted."²⁰ He went on to justify his claim that the Bible occupied an authoritative role as the sufficient rule of faith and life for all Protestants. It was so much a part of the worship and literature of the English people that it could not "without violence and absurdity" be ignored in an English system of education.²¹ Popular opinion, aside from that of ardent secularists and the Nonconformists following the policies of Edward Miall, was in accord with Forster and Henson. In the Board Schools therefore the Bible was given full attention in religious lessons no longer hampered by denominational doctrine and catechisms. The outcome, so far as educators and a number of churchmen were concerned, was highly unsatisfactory.

In 1896 an article in The Journal of Education complained that most churchmen and teachers had become so absorbed in the discussion of what religious instruction should be given in elementary schools, that the whole question of method as applied to this subject had been overlooked.²² The "laissez-faire" policy of the 1870 Act had indeed left Scripture teaching in a muddle and completely without

any sound philosophic principles on which to rest.²³

With very few exceptions claimed one educator,

n/ Bible study is either carried on on the same antiquated method it shared with most branches of education fifty years ago, or has degenerated into a harmful process of 'cramming'. In almost every other study there has been considerable advance. The teaching of science and modern languages, especially, has been revolutionized; yet a glance at the textbooks employed and the examination papers set in Bible history will prove that those discredited phantoms - learning by rote and unassimilated fact-lore - have found a refuge in the Bible class.²⁴

It was thus in the latter years of the century, with the explosion of knowledge in science and biblical studies, that the "simple Bible teaching" of the Cowper-Temple clause seemed acutely inadequate.

To those concerned with the difficulties of Scripture teaching, the neglect of the Bible was most apparent in the large Board Schools. It was reported that by 1879, 140 out of 500 Board Schools had chosen to confine religious teaching to the barest minimum, which meant in practice Scripture reading "without note or comment."²⁵

In the past, despite unscientific teaching and an adherence to verbal inspiration, biblical instruction had included a faithful commentary which was "both lively and interesting in itself, and elevating in its effect on those brought under its influence."²⁶ It had however been superseded by a type of mechanical Scripture drill utterly devoid of educational value. Comprehension was of little concern as pupils were left to make sense themselves out of often senseless material. The minimal time and attention

devoted to Scripture study under many schemes precluded the discussion of any modern thinking on the Bible. The result was at best indifference and at worst skepticism as to the authority of the Sacred Scriptures.

Another educator attributed the deplorable state of religious instruction to the fact that teachers, pressured by parents, School Boards and denominations, had never really had the opportunity to grapple seriously with the whole question of Bible teaching.²⁷ As many teachers, ignorant of the new critical conclusions, continued to hold to verbal inspiration, they brought to the period of religious instruction a set of superstitious ideas about the effectiveness of the biblical material. All the canons of good teaching were set aside. In other subjects the teacher was supposed to use the best powers of his mind to help him in his work; in the teaching of the Bible however there was a tacit understanding that the teacher should carefully "surround himself and his class with an atmosphere of mental fog, or, if you prefer it, 'a dim religious light'...What can a fettered teacher do with a free class? Clearly nothing, save to put on them also fetters like unto his own."²⁸

The reduction of religious instruction to "simple Bible teaching" went hand in hand, in practice, with traditional views regarding the nature and authority of the Bible. As one educational historian has observed, the practice of undenominational instruction, which really meant Bible reading only, was more than likely to have been

sufficient to a generation which held to the doctrine of verbal inspiration very literally.²⁹ The prohibition placed upon sectarian teaching did not mean that dogmatic teaching which crossed denominational lines would also be discontinued. Children were still grounded in such "basal beliefs" as the Fall, the redemption of the world through the Atonement, the Incarnation, the Resurrection and the eternal damnation of the wicked. The Board Schools for the most part tended to fall in line with the teachings of the low church evangelicals. J. Allenson Picton claimed in his pamphlet in The Bible in the School that the Liverpool School Board even went so far as to use the catechism of the Evangelical Free Churches.³⁰ Included in the dogmatic framework of elementary teaching was the belief in an inspired and authoritative Bible, accurate in both scientific and historical detail. It was clear for example that a rigorous orthodoxy prevailed in elementary education from the Report of the Royal Commission on Education of 1888. In use was Joseph Pullinblank's Teacher's Handbook of the Bible which assumed the literal truth of the Old Testament and even of Genesis.³¹ Also in use was William Freeman Lloyd's Abridged Bible Catechism, "an ingenious scheme to set forth the whole evangelical doctrine of the plan of salvation by continuing to furnish in the exact words of the Bible the answer to a number of leading questions."³² Even the story of the serpent in Genesis was assumed to be actual history. The religious teaching in non-denominational

schools was, in short "based upon the acceptance of the Bible, and on the fact that the great body of the parents and children are, in the conventional sense of the word, orthodox Christians".³³

If a teacher did not teach a verbally inspired Bible, the alternative into which he was driven was often not much more satisfactory. Many younger teachers, for a variety of reasons, no longer found it possible to believe in the literal truth of the Scriptures and yet found it impossible to draw a line between reverent criticism and wholesale skepticism. They carefully avoided, therefore, thinking out the subject for themselves, and were content to teach what they called the "facts" of the Bible story, leaving all explanation to one side. N.P. Wood termed this method of Bible teaching the "contents compromise".³⁴ The consequences were not surprising: "Pupils who are beginning to study even English history in a lively and rational manner are repelled by being required to learn by heart unfruitful details of the Hebrew monarchy, or lists of parables and miracles, the most salient fact connected with each apparently being that it is omitted by St. Mark and given by St. Luke."³⁵ G.C. Bell, in Religious Teaching in Secondary Schools, complained that religious teaching was often degraded to the level of unintelligent history teaching; and "there is perhaps no subject that can be taught so unintelligently as history".

The mind may be burdened with facts, dates, details, and plans of battles, so treated as to be little more than a toilsome exercise of the memory; and after years spent upon such work the pupil may never have gained any clear ideas of the social and political lessons which history should teach.³⁶

Indeed, in the late nineteenth century it was common for boys and girls to know facts about insignificant persons and places and yet to know practically nothing about the religious teaching of the Law, the Prophets and the Psalmists.

In addition to placing emphasis upon the "truth of fact" in the Bible, "simple Bible teaching" also tended to encourage the practice of taking biblical texts as final proof for particular dogmas. As denominational teaching and hence the traditions of the Church could no longer be even hinted at in the Board Schools, the Bible became more than ever a theological textbook. Stewart Headlam lamented that the Bible, because of the Cowper-Temple clause, had created an impossible situation for good Bible teaching. Dogma could be taught in the most unintelligent way, based on the text of the Bible rather than upon the decrees of a particular ecclesiastical group.³⁷ The idea that the Bible alone was the religion of Protestants was reinforced by publications such as the Undenominational Primer of Religious Instruction:

As a course of religious teaching, it is in no way intended to be final, and it does not enter into explanation or enforcement of what is popularly understood as 'dogma'. So far as doctrine is concerned, it gives simply the actual words of Scripture, the source to which all denominations refer.³⁸

Finally it was bemoaned that the materials used in School Board syllabuses were often inappropriate both from a psychological and a critical point of view. The selection and arrangement of material had been left largely to amateur teachers, with results which were only too apparent in many officially prescribed schemes. "To judge from some of these schemes, one might suppose, for example, that there is nothing to choose, in point of religious and moral value, between the Book of Joshua and the Gospel of Luke; and that the same part or parts of the Bible are as suitable for children of eight as for youths of fifteen."³⁹ The ordinary manuals of Bible history abounded in detail but gave little indication of the differences in the value or inspired authority of various parts of the Bible. "They cover all with an even surface of comment or paraphrase, even as a plasterer puts a uniform coat of stucco over some old wall, concealing alike the Roman tiles in the basement, and the medieval arch that was filled with bricks in Queen Anne's reign."⁴⁰

Seen as being especially good for infants for example by the Boards of Bolton, Manchester, Rochdale and Newport were the biblical narratives of the Creation, the Fall and the Flood. The years beyond early childhood were covered in the London syllabus by the lives of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, which were meant to be taken as historical fact. Joshua and Judges were recommended for older pupils.⁴¹ The fragmentary nature, difficulty

and moral repulsiveness of the stories selected did little to engender a true appreciation of the Old Testament. Related passages in the historical, prophetic or poetic sections of the books were never studied, or for that matter read together. The stories of Elijah, Elisha and Joshua, difficult as well as morally questionable, were the most frequently required subjects. Joshua and Judges particularly raised objections from educational reformers: "Under the Wanstead Board, the higher standards are set to study Joshua and Judges. It would be difficult to find in all literature two books more full of bloodshed, murder, massacre, and savagery of even more repulsive forms."⁴²

The prophetic material was ignored for the most part, except for studies of Messianic prophecy or a few well-known passages from Isaiah. Finally, the syllabuses were issued to teachers without any further instructions as to how these selected passages were to be taught. There was no indication for example that chapters from Isaiah 40 to Isaiah 66 were thought in some quarters to be from a prophet of the Exile, nor that the Genesis narratives were religious and moral tales of a primitive community. Left to their own devices, teachers usually could do little else but teach in the conventional manner that the Creation story was historically accurate and that the prophets were predictors of the future.

As the traditional views on the Bible were encouraged by the opportunities for religious instruction in Board

Schools, they also continued to dominate the teaching methods and lessons of the denominational schools. Alongside of Catechisms, hymns and prayers, lesson plans similar to those followed earlier in the century were rigorously advocated. A 1906 Report on the Syllabuses of Religious Instruction issued by Diocesan and Other Associations for Use in Church of England Schools revealed many of the same recommendations as those made for Board Schools. The Durham Diocesan Board for example advised that elementary biblical instruction be given in the following four stages:⁴³

Infants: The Creation, the Fall, the history of Cain and Abel, the Flood
 Second Grade: History of Genesis
 Third Grade: Lives of Moses, Joshua and Gideon
 Fourth Grade: I, II Samuel or I, II Kings
 or the period of the Captivity;
 Types and prophecies in Genesis
 and Exodus 1-20.

The difficulties with such a syllabus were similar to those presented by the plans laid down for Board Schools. As there was no further instruction given to teachers, it is likely that the material was approached as literally true and historically infallible. The heavy emphasis on the historical narratives of the Old Testament made the teaching of "facts" easy to carry out. The prophetic literature was excluded while teachers were called upon to include the troublesome stories found in Judges.

The early and middle decades of the nineteenth century conceived of this type of Bible teaching as both

normative and essential for a true understanding of Christian doctrine and morality. It was not until the latter decades of the century that a significant number of voices of dissent were openly raised amidst the persistence of conventional thinking. Churchmen and educators alike joined, in the general atmosphere of changing patterns of religious education, to call for a transformation of the teaching of the Bible. Underlying the protest and the ensuing suggestions for such changes were several factors, including the development of educational psychology, the apparent failure of traditional teaching to achieve the desired results, and the advances being made in the area of biblical scholarship. Particularly influential however was the growth of skepticism and secularism in the last years of the nineteenth and early years of the twentieth centuries. The crude attacks on the Bible launched by ardent rationalists undoubtedly caused anxiety among those entrusted with the instruction of the young. The classroom seemed to be the obvious place from which the new knowledge of the Bible could take root and flourish, halting the inroads of doubt and unbelief.

The Smallpox of Skepticism

By the time biblical criticism had become something of a "popular commodity" among adults, new theories in the area of educational psychology were also beginning

to be taken seriously. Particularly marked was the influence of Johann Friedrich Herbart and Friedrich Froebel at the end of the nineteenth century. The educational reforms which they suggested on the basis of certain theories about the learning process were numerous. Especially important for teachers involved with religious education however was the discovery that the learning capacity of a child developed in the same way that his body developed, by gradual and marked stages.

Although Herbart held important chairs in philosophy and wrote voluminously, he did not impress greatly the public of his day. His educational theories however suddenly became popular after a period of obscurity with the publication of Tuiskon Zeller's Foundation of the Doctrine of Educative Instruction. The book both popularized and modified Herbart's views, and "Herbartianism" became an international educational movement.

Herbart defined as the goal of education the development of morality, but he also spoke of the more immediate goals of the process as being the acquisition of objective knowledge and the cultivation of an interest in the subjective, including the relation of man and society to the highest Being. From the study of certain exemplary historical figures, the child could be led to an analysis of his own broader relationship to society. It was especially important that such a study did not dwell upon characters and events of questionable morality at this early stage, since this was the time

in which a moral sense was developed. Once a child learned something of man's dependence and limitations, he was ready for religious instruction. Herbart believed that the teacher's duty was not to teach dogmatic religious content but to nurture religious consciousness, a consciousness which was awakened in the home long before any formal religious instruction began. Children possessed a "presentiment of an unseen power" which had to be cultivated. They had to be encouraged to develop a subjective assurance that the basic assumptions of religious belief were valid, before any church-going or factual instruction was attempted.⁴⁴

Froebel exercised a strong influence upon progressive education, and also upon religious education in turn during the nineteenth century. He supported the view that a good educational career had to be built upon a good foundation; kindergarten therefore was particularly important, and had to be concerned with the sense perception of a child rather than with factual content. Religious education at an early age was not redemptive in character, but was meant to encourage the child in his own native feelings that he was one with God. Froebel also suggested that, educationally, a child moved through three stages, according to which the contents and methods of a school must be adjusted. How one taught infants and very young children was necessarily quite different from how one taught a pupil in the second stage of "childhood". In the latter Froebel encouraged

self-expression which could be corrected in the next stage of "boyhood".

Increasing emphasis was also laid, in the work of Froebel and others, on putting children in the way of discovering knowledge for themselves. Herbert Spencer exercised a reforming influence in this area on the educational methods of the day. "Children", he claimed, "should be led to make their own investigations. They should be told as little as possible. Humanity has progressed solely by self-instruction ..."⁴⁵ The implications for religious education were significant: tools such as an edited Bible and related study books could be of great value in educating children in the truths of religion. Also the simple facts of compilation and progressive revelation in the biblical record could be readily discovered by the pupils themselves. Educational psychology not only demanded the grading of lessons, but it compelled educators to recognize that the same type of piety was not normal for all ages.⁴⁶

These suggestions proved to be in sharp contrast to the traditional biblical teaching carried out in Board and denominational schools. Emphasis on learning a mass of biblical "facts" and a lack of discrimination with regards to the difficulty and moral quality of the Old Testament material led some to question the nature of religious instruction in the light of educational psychology. Material wholly inappropriate to the age or interests of children had in the past been the bulk of religious

educational curricula. The Ten Commandments were favoured over vivid and fascinating narratives; syllabuses followed the order of the Old Testament rather than the developmental stages of the child.

While a traditional view of the Bible encouraged biblical instruction at odds with educational psychology, the modern view appeared to be remarkably in accord with such requirements. The evidence at the heart of higher criticism for example had always been presented to the public as being self-evident. It would, therefore, be only natural to allow the children to discover for themselves double narrative accounts or historical anomalies within the pages of the Old Testament. Also the idea that the religion and history of Israel developed progressively fit easily into a scheme of Bible teaching based upon the type of material which a child in varying stages could assimilate. Several suggested syllabuses sympathetic with biblical criticism took advantage of this correlation by suggesting the simple folk-tales of Genesis for very young children, the historical narratives, carefully selected, for junior children (ages 7 to 9) and the prophetic material for older children. In this way the progression of years corresponded with the spiritual and moral development of the Israelites.

Glaring deficiencies in the religious education of British children began to attract attention. Lacking was a child's ability to reflect upon and apply biblical information which was memorized and repeated over and over

again. A Government Report on the State of Education in the Country Districts of Scotland as early as 1866 expressed concern over the failure of pupils to answer the most basic questions on the Old and New Testaments which varied in the least from those repeated day after day. The Report recorded the following example as one among many:

In the examination of a class in the history of John the Baptist, one intelligent looking child was asked, 'Why was John called the Baptist?' No answer. 'Did you ever see a baptism?' No answer. 'What is baptism?', upon which three or four put out their hands to signify their knowledge, and one, a girl of about twelve, was asked, 'Well, what is baptism?'. We expected 'a christening' would be the answer, or some such simple definition would be given, but were astonished by the following words repeated rapidly: 'Baptism is a sacrament wherein the washing of water etc.', and then we recognised the answer in the Shorter Catechism to the question...⁴⁷

Memorization of passages and details without any expository instruction also bred misunderstanding. A 1901 report on the London School Board examinations in Scripture knowledge revealed such a situation. The verse "Take no thought for the morrow", was explained by one pupil as meaning, "Enjoy today whilst we can.". Likewise the phrase, "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets", was interpreted as an imperative sentence by one student: "Go and hang the law and the prophets.".⁴⁸

While this inability to understand the material of the Bible at the most fundamental level was a cause for concern, a more powerful impetus towards modern biblical

teaching was the apparent increase of immorality among young people. Clearly the teaching of the Bible was not having as great an effect on the behavior of youth as many had hoped. Evidence for an increase in immorality was cited by many churchmen and educators. One educational reformer, when confronted with the assurance that the Bible was still taught in the English schools, asked:

Are there ten percent of our boys who possess any interest higher than that of 'muddied oafs'? Is not this football interest the very highest they possess, their other interests being still worse - drinking, smoking, gambling and the patronising of low music halls? Is the language we hear in our streets better or worse than it was? Is the behaviour of our boys in the streets such as we can approve?⁴⁹

The mechanical nature of "simple Bible teaching", at times without note or comment as the Birmingham School Board required, left little opportunity for probing the religious and moral truths underlying the biblical material. It was claimed that:

We are asking the wrong questions and getting the wrong answers when we seek mechanical devices for imparting knowledge: 'What the education is that will best enable a man to educate himself, ought surely to be the paramount question' - Children may know the Bible by heart but remain little hooligans...⁵⁰

Many churchmen were convinced that at the root of the growing immorality around them was a thorough-going skepticism which infiltrated the minds of the young from all quarters. There were for example the crude attacks on the Bible in the penny tracts showing woodcuts of God, complete with beard and umbrella, strolling in

a very English walled garden.⁵¹ More detrimental to the faith of the young, however, was the uninteresting and mechanical way in which the Bible was approached in the classroom. Children were naturally inquisitive, but when their questions were either answered evasively, or rebuked as irreverent, they sunk into a state of mental indolence from which it was almost impossible to rouse them in later years. Miss Houghton spoke of the "incipient infidelity" in school books which found prose in poetry, fact in imagination and doctrine in sentiment.⁵²

Another article claimed that:

This is the reason why the Bible, in which our youths are so carefully drilled, which they are again and again informed in the best of books, is becoming more and more of a dead letter in private and social life. For, when the young of both sexes leave the school-room and come out into the world; when they find that the authority of the book they have been taught to regard with an irrational superstition is widely questioned and denied; when some of its contents are plainly shown to be devoid of scientific, historical, or moral value, then, in the inevitable reaction, never having grasped the spiritual connexion and higher poetical truth of the sacred writings, they too often cast the Bible entirely aside.⁵³

Also profoundly disturbing for educators, however, was the penetration of skepticism and anxiety into the homes of pupils. Arthur Benson, Assistant Master at Eaton, spoke of the problems faced by pupils whose parents had become vaguely skeptical about the truth of Christianity.⁵⁴ Brought up to regard the Bible as literally true, they had in recent years come into contact with the higher criticism. Many parents did not have the time nor the ability to delve into critical questions for themselves;

they began to have worries not only about the historicity of Noah's ark, but also about the implications of criticism for the validity of the New Testament. They found themselves with a "dizzying intellectual prospect" which could only be passed on to their children.

The solution was clear enough to many churchmen and educators: biblical instruction had to be radically altered, and this alteration had to include at least some basic instruction from a critical point of view. It was only in this way that teachers could hope to make the Bible intelligible and interesting for young people, and to guard against the attacks of skepticism and immorality. Modern thinking on the Bible, increasingly becoming a popular commodity, could not be ignored in an area so important as religious education. The solution, based on the principle that the higher criticism could and should be popularized in the classroom, was embodied in a number of publications: general teaching methods were presented to instructors in books and articles; Bibles for young people arranged according to the dates of composition suggested by the higher critics were printed in abundance; and books on the prophets and early narratives of Genesis set out in a non-technical way the generally acknowledged results of critical investigation. The extent to which these aids were used is difficult to estimate. That they enjoyed some measure of popularity however can be seen from the quantity which appeared as well as the continuous recommendations accorded them by

teachers and churchmen alike.

In many books dealing with the general principles of religious education, the conscientious teacher was advised to teach his pupils nothing which they would have to unlearn in the future.⁵⁵ Traditionalist views on the Bible which dominated the classrooms were in sharp contrast to the views of many thinking people. Teachers were doing a disservice to their pupils by inculcating largely indefensible opinions. If they genuinely wished to guard against skepticism, they must not fear the new thinking but welcome it. The ideas to be taught of course had to be founded upon the "assured results" of sound scholarship and not upon the muddled theories of the radical critics. One educator claimed,

It is objected, and very rightly, that to introduce, into the classroom the conflicting theories of various schools of German and British criticism would be attended by the most disastrous consequences; but it does not follow that we are to withhold from our pupils facts and principles which are recognised by the whole intellectual world.⁵⁶

These assured results, if skillfully presented, would go a long way towards defending young and vulnerable minds.

It was believed that children and adolescents would respond readily to the progressive stages of religious and moral truth in the biblical revelation. In The Use of the Bible in the Education of the Young, T.C. Rayment was concerned with channeling this responsiveness in order to stem the tide of youthful skepticism.⁵⁷ He divided man's slide into infidelity into three stages corresponding to his physical development. There was the period of

childhood in which traditional views were unquestioningly accepted; the period of adolescence which brought religious doubt and turmoil, and finally a period of young adulthood which more often than not was characterised by a lasting religious indifference. Raymont's book was designed to encourage the conduct of education in childhood and adolescence in such a way that the third stage of religious indifference would be eliminated. This could be done only by answering the anxious questions of adolescents with the conclusion of biblical criticism. In his essay in a collection on The Bible and the Child, A.S. Peake reached a similar conclusion:

It is our privilege to place our young people at the right point of view, and preserve a faith which shall not be incompatible with intelligent integrity. We must vaccinate them with criticism to save them from the smallpox of skepticism.⁵⁸

Improvement in Bible teaching was called for, and, as it later came to be defined, involved not only an improvement in method and a more satisfactory dealing with the problems of modern criticism, but also a rightful emphasis on the spiritual value of the Bible in the religious lesson. Moral and literary approaches to the Bible thus dominated the new teaching suggestions. Children were to be captured by the beauty of a passage or excited by its deeper spiritual meaning. They were to see the Bible as a whole, including carefully selected narratives and prophetic literature. Above all they were not to be sheltered from but gently opened to the higher cri-

ticism by lessons on composite authorship and religious development.

New Approaches to Biblical Instruction: Religious and Moral

Churchmen sympathetic towards the higher criticism regarded the decades after 1870 as hopeful ones for advances in biblical instruction, despite the general atmosphere of controversy over religious education and the chaotic and "unphilosophic" Scripture teaching in the classroom. Encouraging was the fact that Bible teaching no longer needed to be encumbered with denominational doctrine. The Cowper-Temple clause, to be sure, had in effect strengthened the traditional presentation of the Bible, but many educators were certain that the operation of the clause could be redirected. Teachers had the opportunity, if they desired, to confront the Bible as a collection of books with a history and a message which did justice to divine inspiration but at the same time took account of critical investigation. Intense study of the Bible since the middle of the nineteenth century had left teachers in a "rich and happy position."⁵⁹ At no previous time had so much effort and care been poured into the study of their main textbook. A wealth of material on the meaning of words, the development of the biblical documents and the growth of the history and religion of Israel was becoming readily available. The Bible, once a remote fetish, had been returned to

history and humanity: it could not fail to enliven faith.

By opening up this growing body of knowledge to young people as well as to adults, it was recognized that an increased appreciation of sacred Scripture would result. Teachers were encouraged to use every available resource in teaching the Bible to children and young people. The Bible in the hands of children was an important tool, but it required supplementing by various introductory books on the literature, religion and history of ancient Israel. Also recommended for use were various readers presenting the Bible in large, bold type, arranged according to literary classification or chronological order. Such resources became increasingly common after 1900. The books and articles setting out general principles on modern biblical instruction often provided bibliographies for the use of teachers, the material most frequently recommended being considered in chapter II. Those books which were designed for use by children and young adults included such popular works as:

The Bible Reader by E. Nixon and H.R. Steel
A Short Introduction to the Interpretation
of the Old Testament by G.H. Box
Lessons from the Old Testament by H.G. Glazebrook
Old Testament History by J.M. Hardwick and
 H. Costley-White
Old Testament History for Schools by T.C. Fry
How We Got Our Bible by J.P. Smyth
The Century Bible Series
Old Testament Bible Stories by R.G. Moulton

Teachers were also urged to use illustrative material

such as maps and photographs in their teaching. Children should be led to feel the reality of the Bible and to understand that the books were written by real men. Aside from acting to deter skepticism, the higher criticism had been responsible for many gains when it came to biblical studies. In an article on "The Present State of Scripture Teaching," N.P. Wood claimed that, "It is, above all, important that boys should share in the spiritual gain which must come to all readers through a true appreciation of the results of biblical scholarship."⁶¹ For pupil and teacher alike these gains were significant in that a once mysterious and unintelligible book had been rendered comprehensible and relevant to the lives of ordinary believers - and young people - in the late nineteenth century.

Biblical instruction in the past had all too often been totally unrelated to the lives which pupils were called upon to lead as well as the temptations which they had to face. Children were required to learn descriptions of the Tabernacle or accounts of the Year of Jubilees, passages which bore little relation to the world around them.⁶² This was an unfortunate situation as the young were open to and interested in any instruction which they sensed had a practical bearing upon them. The higher criticism however brought new signs of hope. It did much to mend new color and life to the pages of ancient literature. This effect was most obvious in the new understanding and emphasis given to the Hebrew

prophets by the higher critics. In the lessons these messengers of God could speak clearly to the moral behavior of young students in the nineteenth century. Prophecy was no longer to be taught as a series of interesting riddles to be solved at some future date, but as the cornerstone of Old Testament spirituality. It was a spirituality at once linked to that of the New Testament as well as to the Christian of the contemporary era. H. Craddock-Watson, headmaster of Merchant Taylor's School in Liverpool, commented upon the enlivening of the prophets for young students:

How interesting Amos and Hosea might be made...to a Sixth Form when it was pointed out that they were dealing with religious and social problems of their own age, very like those of our day, and that people lived everyday lives, with extremes of wealth and poverty, under the Hebrew prophets as in the twentieth century.⁶³

The advocates of both a literary and religious approach agreed that the Bible should not be used, especially with children, as a book from which to extract theological formulas. Modern investigation had shown the Bible to be a rich source of religious truth and not "the mere guarantee of a system constructed largely in independence of it."⁶⁴ This religious truth was clothed in literary beauty and presented in such a fashion as to stir the hearts and minds of children. To ignore the gains of critical study and to continue to proof-text from a living document was to kill that document for the young. R.F. Horton declared:

It is enough to say that the undogmatic method of the Scriptures seems to us far more suitable for the training of the children than the dogmatic methods of Creeds and Churches. Indeed, the Bible is in a very curious sense a children's book. The method of teaching rather by tales and parables than by precepts is the ideal method for training children. The book feeds the imagination and cultivates the moral sympathies. It evokes faith, in the first instance, towards God the Creator, and leads the mind judiciously to God the Father through Jesus Christ the Son. It avoids definitions and arguments, relying upon the spirit which is at work in every human being.⁶⁵

At the heart of the inadequate method of Scripture teaching was the fact that the Old Testament had been read too much as a history book. Yet the history of the Israelites had been written under divine guidance for the main purpose of teaching religion and morality. The historical detail had been regarded, in traditional teaching, as an end in itself, whereas the chief aim and object of the lessons on the Old Testament should be: To set forth what the Scriptures revealed about the character of God in his relations with man; to interpret and show the moral value and significance of the many examples of human action and character in the Old Testament; to show how the fundamental ideas of the Gospel - sin, righteousness and redemption - are found in germ in the Old Testament; and finally to lead young people to appreciate the value of the Old Testament. A subsidiary but important aim in the classroom should be to show that the books of the "Divine Library" were noble models of literature in a great variety of forms.⁶⁶

The value of the Old Testament as a source of moral teaching was particularly emphasized in the new approach

to biblical instruction. Henson for example claimed that, "The Bible is, by all competent teachers, declared to possess certain qualities of its own which constitute it uniquely well-adapted for use as an instrument for the moral training of the young."⁶⁷ Helena Powell, principal of the Cambridge Training College, stressed the use of the Old Testament stories for the sake of the moral lessons they contained.⁶⁸ By their use a teacher could speak to the faults common to all children without embarrassing an individual child: "...The girl who, in the excitement of a school friendship, is apt to sit loosely to family ties, may learn the right proportion from Johnathan who, 'loving David as his own soul,' stayed with his father to the end..."⁶⁹

The influence of the philosopher and educator Johann Friedrich Herbart on British education served to highlight the educational concern for morality apart from the communication of religious truth. The Herbartian aim in education was to create good men; as these were men who willed rightly, educational efforts were directed towards the perfection of the will and the cultivation of right habits. In The Reform of Moral and Biblical Education, Frank Hayward, fellow of the College of Preceptors, took up the Herbartian emphasis on morals and contrasted it with the obviously deficient religious instruction being conducted in the British Board Schools. While pure Herbartianism excluded the Bible from the moral training of children, Hayward retained it, laying down

specific conditions for its use: The material taught to children had to be carefully selected and presented in light of modern critical investigations. The moral lesson of the passages was to be of primary but not exclusive importance. "Biblical matter," he asserted, "should be selected primarily for its moral value, but from this as a centre, should radiate various lines of historical, geographical, literary and critical matter."⁷⁰

Felix Adler's book on The Moral Instruction of Children was highly praised by Hayward. Adler, it was claimed, had a genius for evolving good lesson material out of even the most unpromising Bible stories. This was especially true of the story of Adam and Eve, long gone stagnant by centuries of rigid theological interpretation. Adler regarded it however as "a wonderful story for children, deserving to be placed at the head of all others, for it inculcates the cardinal virtue of childhood obedience."⁷¹ After discussing Adam and Eve as two children living in a beautiful garden along with their father, Adler continued:

One day it happened that Eve was passing near the tree, when what should she hear but a snake talking to her...Now the snake, you know, was no real snake at all; she never saw it; she only heard its voice. And, you know, when we want to do anything wicked, there is within every one of us something bad that seems to whisper: 'Just look! Mere looking will do you no harm,' and then, 'Just taste; no one sees you.' So the snake was the bad feelings in Eve's heart.⁷²

Herbartians in other countries may have been able to speak of moral education divorced from religious principles, but their English counterparts for the most part did not. Those concerned with the moral development of children normally could not conceive of such without the aid of the Bible and certain spiritual truths about God and man. It was true that some educators and authors such as Adler drew out only the moral implications of the biblical narratives in their manuals for teachers, but they appear to be exceptional cases. Religious truth and moral truth were inextricably linked in the educational enterprise. u/

Once the importance of a moral and religious approach to the Bible was stated, the popular books and articles for teachers moved on to suggest certain alterations in the normal pattern of Bible instruction. One major demand was that the material used with children be carefully selected. Clearly one had to strain to find moral truth in certain parts of Judges or in something like the story of Jael and Deborah. Teachers were urged not to rehearse with children the savage and cruel portions of the Bible but to select those with elevating and enobling lessons.⁷³ Also, given a limited amount of time, teachers were advised to reduce the number of facts taught to children in order to adequately discuss with them the deeper meanings of the Bible. Finally modern biblical criticism had to be kept constantly in mind. Teachers were encouraged to see that the historicity of a passage

was certainly of background interest to them, but that it in no way affected the meaning of the Bible in teaching edifying truth. Books were published both for teachers and children which focused on these edifying truths underlying many Old Testament passages.

Such changes were evident in Eugene Stock's Story of the Bible, written in 1906 at the request of the Dean of Carlisle for use with young people of confirmation age. With the conclusions of the critics in mind, the book attempted to tell briefly and in simple language the story of the Bible from the early age of Old Testament writing down to the latest missionary versions. The author was intent upon teaching what he believed to be the true nature of the Bible: The Mohammedans thought that the Koran came straight from heaven, "but do you think that God sent the Bible straight down from heaven like that, just as it is? Not at all. God's way of sending His messages to men was quite different."⁷⁴ He instead chose to use history, songs, poems and letters in the communication of his revelation. "Most of the men who wrote the books did not know that they were writing part of God's great book. They wrote histories, or songs, or letters for the people of their own times. But God was all the while guiding them in their writing, so that what they wrote should be suitable for His Messages."⁷⁵

Montefiore, in his Bible for Home Reading, also attempted to introduce a broader concept of inspiration and religious truth to young readers. They may ask how the men

who wrote the Bible got to know so much about God and goodness. God told them, explained Montefiore, but not in the same way that a teacher might tell pupils about a strange fish off the coast of Africa which they had never heard of nor seen. We know that God gave the Jews special help, but the exact way in which he did this is not important to know. What was important was that if people were good and desired to know God, God would help them.⁷⁶

One of the most widely known and highly recommended teaching aids along these same lines was The Dawn of Revelation, written by Mary Bramston and published in 1899. A second edition appeared in 1908. The book was praised by Hayward as the "boldest attempt which I know of to introduce critical results into schools".⁷⁷ Designed to aid teachers of religious instruction in secondary schools, the book popularized the idea of a "religious reading" of the Old Testament. The religious truths of the Bible had been neglected by both traditionalists, who were obsessed with literal accuracy, and the more radical critics who were constantly disputing over literary technicalities. While Miss Bramston clearly accepted the assured results of the higher criticism, she introduced them only insofar as they served to clarify the moral and religious teaching of the biblical narratives. It was this teaching that was of primary importance in the classroom. The author claimed in her introduction that:

These lessons are an attempt to bring out the religious lessons of the Old Testament combined with the accepted conclusions of modern criticism, so far as these modify the older views of Israelite history and the circumstances of prophetic teaching. The modern view of the dates of Deuteronomy, Leviticus and the second part of Isaiah has been adopted; the smaller details of the Higher Criticism have been passed over. It is the atmosphere of controversy rather than the results of criticism, which militates against the religious reading of the Bible.⁷⁸

The book supplied teachers with a storehouse of information on the growth and character of the Old Testament literature and on the development of the Jewish religion. Complete lessons were provided on the first twelve topics as well as detailed suggestions on how to handle the remaining material. The author revealed a close acquaintance with the work of Driver and other critics along with the trends of Babylonian, Assyrian and Egyptian history.

The first lesson, entitled "The Subjects of the Bible", was a key one in that here the main moral and religious truths running through the entire Scriptures were presented. Children were to be taught first that the Bible is composed of many books written by many people. Some of these authors were taught wonderful thoughts by God, thoughts which are usually called REVELATION. The teacher was encouraged to then discuss these thoughts in detail, dividing them into those relevant to man's relation to God and those concerned with man's relation to other men. These biblical truths were presented by Miss Bramston along with other educators as including:⁷⁹

The Creation of Man in God's Image: All men and women in the world were made by God capable of being good, and meant to love as God's children, to be like Him in character.

The Fall of Man: Very few men and women do live as God's children; some are quite ignorant about Him, and others are very cruel, greedy, selfish and bad in many other ways. They are quite unlike God.

The Need of Redemption: These men and women who are now so unlike God can and must be in some way or other brought back to His likeness.

The Brotherhood of Man: All the children of one Father are brothers and sisters to one another; so all men and all women are brothers and sisters, and bound to help and care for one another.

The duty of those who know more to those who know less: The men and women who know about God are bound to pass on their knowledge to men and women who do not know about Him.

The choice of some people for special training so as to be better able to help the rest: Almighty God has so ordered things that he has at different times chosen out a special set of people, and given them special teaching and special help, so that they may be able to help the rest of the world. The Old Testament gives us the history of one special nation, which was thus chosen out of all other nations, for a very special purpose of help for them.

The teacher was instructed finally to use the remaining lesson time in discussing how these truths were actually communicated in the Bible. Children were to be told that the Old Testament writer could have had the words of such thoughts dictated to him by God, or he could have been asked to express such thoughts in his own words. Thus when the inspiration of the Bible was spoken of, the pupils were not to understand this as a process of mechanical expression, but rather as a creative, human operation. What must be emphasized were

the great lessons behind the Old Testament, and not the exact words or details of the text.

In the next lesson children were encouraged to see the Creation story as a poetic description of the beginning of the world as they knew it. The writer of the story did not mean to tell his readers the exact order in which things were created, nor the exact amount of time which it took. What was important was the spiritual message of the passage; God was the Creator of everything in nature, including man who was made in His own image.

A similar emphasis on spiritual truth is seen throughout the entire course of lessons on the historical books of the Old Testament. The story of Cain and Abel was meant to teach that all men were bound to look upon themselves as keepers of other people. It was urged that as the religious truths were the most important in biblical teaching, the historicity of the material and hence the details of the higher criticism were of little importance. What could be said was that, "As Adam and Eve represent to us the human race, so Cain and Abel may represent to us not single persons only but different races of mankind."⁸⁰ Whether they were actual individuals or whether they were constructed as typical figures, the point of the story remained the same.

The story of the Deluge likewise taught among other things that nature was in the hands of God who had seen fit to make a covenant with men. Even in the stories more closely related to secular history such as that of

Abraham, the underlying truths were singled out for emphasis. Abraham was thus to be presented to children as a man specially chosen by God, and as one who responded with obedience to that call.

Several other popular publications followed Miss Bramston's Dawn of Revelation in setting out the moral and religious purposes of a succession of Old Testament narratives. One notable work was Heinricus von Oort's Bible for Young People, published in Britain in 1873. The Bible, for von Oort, was a source of ancient history and literature, but it was above all a book of religion:

We hope that we shall never lose sight of the fact that the Bible is the book of religion while we are speaking of its stories, and so that we may gradually find a direct or indirect answer to the questions, 'Who and what is God for us?' and 'What are we to do and leave undone?' for it is our heartfelt desire and the highest object of our efforts to quicken the conscience of our readers, and to make their religious feelings deeper and purer.⁸¹

The writers of the Bible "concerned themselves very little with the question of whether what they narrated really happened just as they represented it; and their readers were equally far from exercising what is now known as historical criticism."⁸² Thus secondary school pupils to whom von Oort's Bible was primarily addressed were not to be surprised at finding legends and folk lore in the Bible. These forms of writing effectively conveyed the truths of religion; they could not, however, be used to build up a dependable picture of the past. In a chapter on "The Patriarchs before the Flood", the

editors of the Bible pointed out that the numbers found in Genesis 5 were not part of an ancient tradition which may have had some historical foundations, but were instead inventions by the writer himself as part of a chronological system. Leaving aside however the question of the antiquity of the human race, von Oort turned to why the author had ascribed such long lives to the forefathers of the Israelites, as well as what he intended to show by it. The author wished to show his readers that, like the situation described in the story of Paradise, there had been happier times in the past, and that the principal feature of these golden days was a long life. Men however had been gradually growing shorter lived, and whether because of sin or some other circumstances, the fact that all men must die was an important albeit melancholy thought.⁸³

Though arranged with the literary units of myth, epic and legend very much in mind, Telling Bible Stories by Louise M. Houghton also stressed the religious and moral messages of the Old Testament narratives. This was especially important in teaching young children if the conflicts and doubts of later life were to be avoided. Many stories had to be treated as religious only in nature, designed not for the purpose of giving a true picture of historical events. This was true of the "morning stories" of the Hebrews: the Creation, the Fall, the Flood, Cain and Abel and the Tower of Babel. Yet there was no better way of introducing young minds

to the fundamental truths of the character of God and his relation to the universe and man, as well as truths about the nature of sin and its deadly effect on man's character and destiny. The author expounded upon the truths wrapped in each of these stories, the final one being the Tower of Babel fable. *expatiates*

This last of the morning stories was attractive to children in that it was characterized by an unsophisticated freshness. It was explained to parents and teachers that the story was an attempt by the ancient Hebrews to account for the different races and languages all over the earth. Miss Houghton emphasized among other things the uniqueness of this story among other primitive literatures as well as the play on the word "Babel" in which the author attempted to express a state of confusion. For the purposes of teaching however, the main object was to instruct children in the religious message of the story:

The lightness of the old writer's spirit... did not prevent the seriousness of his motive, which was purely religious: to show the evil of man exalting himself against his Maker, and seeking his own glory instead of the glory of God. When men rebel against God they become discordant among themselves, as here typified by the confusion of their speech.⁸⁴

Thus, one way of approaching the Bible in the light of modern investigation and educational theory was to emphasize the edifying as opposed to the literal truth. The work of the higher critics was largely responsible for this renewed appreciation of the spiritual content

of the biblical narratives. They probed behind the words of Scripture to the circumstances and motives of those who wrote the words. Their work also drew attention to the place of the Hebrew literature in the literature of the ancient world, and to the literary forms present within the Old Testament. The Bible came to be appreciated for its beautiful form as well as enobling thoughts, and many churchmen concerned with the education of the young saw in this emphasis a means of approaching the Bible in the classroom.

It was the belief that the Bible was first and foremost literature and not science or philosophy or even theology which motivated many individuals concerned with modern biblical teaching. This belief for example was shared with teachers in Washington Gladden's essay in The Bible and the Child as well as in a pamphlet on The Place of the Bible in Secular Education written by Stewart Headlam, a member of the London School Board.⁸⁵ The first step towards implementing a literary study of the Bible was the creation of an adequate appreciation of literature in general in the classroom. According to Headlam, the time devoted in syllabuses to literature was given grudgingly. This indeed would be one of the greatest obstacles for the progressive teacher. Technical and scientific subjects were being granted an increasing amount of attention. Matthew Arnold lamented over the situation in 1872, when he claimed that the study of letters was neglected in the "schools for the

people."⁸⁶ The popularity of and facilities for the natural sciences were increasing; good textbooks in the area surpassed anything comparable in literary studies.

Once adequate attention had been given to general literature, it was legitimate for one to ask why the Bible should be singled out for special emphasis. Headlam suggested that the Bible was so ingrained in the national life in Britain as to deserve peculiar attention. Matthew Arnold likewise anticipated the query by saying that it was the one piece of English literature with which the common people were familiar. They could be introduced to the whole study of literature far more readily by references to Zion and Babylon rather than Athens and Rome. "The Bible," he wrote, "stands before the learner as an immense whole; yet to know the Bible as a whole, to know it in its historical aspect and its connection, to have a systematic acquaintance with its documents, is as great an affair as to know Greek literature as a whole..."⁸⁷

The material of the Bible, and particularly the narratives, had to be allowed to make their own impression upon young people.⁸⁸ A teacher should not constantly seek to draw dogmatic points from the passages, but neither should he be perpetually be drawing out moral lessons. All that had to be carried out was the simple presentation of the Old Testament as a body of literature; the deeper truths therein would be instilled. R.G. Moulton set out certain principles as to how this

was to be accomplished practically. His ideas were taken up by T.C. Raymont in The Use of the Bible in the Education of the Young.

Moulton began with what he designated as "stories" in the Old Testament. These were distinguished from history, not because they were not true, but because they were pieces of writing which appealed to the emotions and the imagination. The Bible was rich with stories, but these were often problematically intertwined with sections of history. Yet each type of writing demanded a particular mental attitude. Moulton claimed that, "Just as, in using a microscope, you alter the focus for each new object that you look at, so you want to bring a totally different attitude of mind to bear upon story from the attitude of mind you have had in studying history."⁸⁹ Moulton made the interesting suggestion that in any properly printed Bible, there ought to be something such as a title to indicate when the reader passed from story to history.

Used in this sense, the "story" was natural food for children. Such material could be employed in the earliest stages of literary study. It was recommended that the biblical stories be isolated from their historical framework and presented to children on their own. Teachers were advised to avoid all but the minimal amount of teaching at this point. The stories used however had to be carefully selected, preferably from each of the major divisions in the history of Israel.

The next stage outlined by Moulton was that of "masterpieces". Here pupils were encouraged to grasp literary forms such as drama, poetry or oratory, and to study exceptionally good examples of these forms. He used as an example the Song of Deborah, which was to be presented to pupils in its true literary form as an antiphonal chorus of men and women.

The final stage of literary study looked at the complete literary unit, whether it be document, chapter or book, as it stood in the Old Testament. Neglect of this in past teaching had resulted largely from seeing the Bible as a sort of scrapbook or collection of convenient mottoes supporting presupposed theological positions. The problem had been aggravated by the reading of isolated bits of Scripture in Sunday school and school worship services. The dictates of tradition and theology however were to be ignored. Pupils had to be made aware of the essential unity of the Bible and so had to deal eventually with larger portions of Scripture in any serious study. Teachers therefore were encouraged to read entire books or at least literary units or chapters at one sitting in order to avoid many common misunderstandings. "To read through, at one sitting or continuously, with judicious omissions, the story of Abraham, or the story of Joseph, or the story of Elijah, or the story of David, or the story of Ruth, not stopping to make expository comments...would be a most valuable exercise in a Sunday school class."⁹⁰

A teacher also had to allow the children to feel the beauty in the language of the readings and to participate in the excitement of a section on patriotism. Headlam for example considered the beauty of a phrase such as "God is love". Belief in this idea could not be forced upon children, for this would be futile. Rather, it must be permitted to "find" a child who comes to the Bible as literature and who responds to it as such in the first instance.

Tools were an essential part of this literary approach to the Bible, and several were recommended in the books and pamphlets which dealt with religious instruction. The Great Prophecy of Israel's Restoration by Matthew Arnold was among the most popular and the earliest. Recognizing as he did the importance of studying the Bible as literature in any educational curriculum, he set out in his preface the purpose of the book:

With the aim of enabling English school-children to read as a connected whole the last twenty-seven chapters of Isaiah, without being frequently stopped by passages of which the meaning is almost quite unintelligible, I have sought to choose, among the better meanings which have been offered for each of these passages, that which seemed the best, and to weave it into the authorised text in such a manner as not to produce any sense of strangeness or interruption.⁹¹

School children often sensed that there was something "grand" about these chapters, but they were prevented from a full appreciation of the text by obscurities and an apparent senseless arrangement of the material. These

Arnold hoped to overcome in his reorganization of the text and his notes at the end of the book. These twenty-seven chapters were ideal for literary study: they presented a literary whole which was manageable in length and historically significant. Above all however they were of admirable literary beauty in style and treatment. It was with such material that a child should confront the biblical text.

After an extensive preface, Arnold presented the text of the twenty-seven chapters as one piece of literature with an indication of the chapter and verse numbers placed unobtrusively in the margins. Then followed a series of notes on each chapter intended to explain obscure words and phrases, often in the light of modern scholarship. Of chapter 53 for example Arnold wrote, "The application of this well-known chapter to Christ will be in everyone's mind. But it must be our concern here to find out its primary historical import, and its connection with the discourse where it stands." After checking biblical and historical references, Arnold concluded, "Adding all this to the data furnished by the 53rd chapter itself, we have for the original subject of this chapter a martyred servant of God, recognisable by the Jews of the Exile under the allusions here made to him..."⁹²

Arnold's book went some measure towards satisfying the need for edited biblical material for schools. It was the whole Bible however which had to be put in order before the Scriptures could be effectively taught to

children. This would involve simple statements of modern criticism or its effects as well as the inclusion of the Apocrypha and the clear translation and bold printing of the text. H. Craddock-Watson complained that the Bible was often a dull book for boys because of its lack of editing. In the Bibles used by most pupils, there was no distinction between prose and poetry, history and allegory. There was no system of chronology and nothing to indicate the various dates and values of the different books.⁹³ Headlam also commented upon this pressing need in his pamphlet:

This, we want to be told, is the date which the best critics have given to this book; these portions are old traditions of unknown date; this is the true translation of this word, if it is against the law to print it we will leave it out, but in the name of truth we will not mistranslate it; neither in a translation will we put in a word to help prove a doctrine.⁹⁴

If this editing process was carried out, the parts of greatest beauty in the Old Testament would assert themselves:

Get it all put into order by all means by the historians and men of literature - get it printed like an ordinary book - and then even more than now I feel convinced that it will find you, that it will make for righteousness as no other literature will.⁹⁵

Several aids to Bible reading along the lines Headlam called for were published at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries. They varied in format as well as in the extent to which the implications of biblical criticism were presented. The approach

to the Bible emphasizing its literary value by no means shunned the higher criticism, but neither did it make a point of directly instructing pupils in the details of critical methods and results. Moulton for example claimed that he was not concerned with the dates of the material nor the veracity of the facts in the narratives; students and teachers were dealing with a body of historical literature and not a chronicle of the Israelite nation. Headlam claimed that the legends were spoiled for children by a teacher's comment that they "were not true".⁹⁶ Though Arnold himself accepted a late date for Isaiah 40 through 66, he made it clear in his work that "such a vexed question" had no place in the teaching of the young. He determined that his book would have "nothing in it which should hinder the adherent of any school of Biblical interpretation or of religious belief from using it, and from putting it into the hands of children."⁹⁷

While Arnold's work did not deal explicitly with the results of higher criticism and guarded against the tendency "to carve too freely" the biblical text, the influence of such results was present in the way in which his material was arranged and commented upon. The last twenty-seven chapters, the book claimed, were placed at that point in history where they could be best understood and where they took on a fuller meaning. This meant, for Arnold, at the time of Cyrus' attack on Babylon. He attempted to place his young audience in the position of

the Jews hearing the prophecies for the first time. The best vantage point appeared to be at the late date of the Exile. People were free, Arnold declared, to suppose that the chapters held the prophecies of Isaiah, son of Amoz, but they had to admit that the significance of the material was much more obvious when attributed to a later date.

This implicit reliance upon the higher criticism was common to many Bibles edited for use by young people. It took many forms and covered many aspects of modern biblical investigation including the analysis of documents, the progressive growth of the Hebrew legislation, the recognition of folk-lore and pious tales in the biblical material, and the belief that prophecy must be understood in connection with a specific historical situation.

In 1898 the popular Bible for Home and School was brought out by T. Bartlett and John Peters. F.W. Farrar, in the introduction, described the work as "a serious contribution to the truthful and intelligent study of the Holy Writ". It was in all respects the kind of Bible which Headlam saw as essential for use in schools. The reader was presented with the books of the Bible in paragraphs and not verses, the latter being a pattern which so often encouraged the "habit of regarding Scripture as composed of congeries of separate fragments", leading to the misunderstanding of the Bible.⁹⁸ Poetry in books such as Isaiah and the Psalms was printed as

poetry. Bartlett and Peters also used running headlines to shed light on particular passages as well as to attract the immediate attention of children and to improve the physical appearance of the Old Testament. Thus, the poem in Exodus 15 was entitled, "The Song of the Sea", while a passage in Amos was given the headline, "A Sermon against Drunkenness".

One of the most significant aids introduced in this work was the correction of previously mistranslated words and phrases. The Tent of Meeting for example was more accurately described as the Tabernacle of the Congregation. Explanatory glosses were used to explain further obscurities such as the meaning of certain Hebrew names (i.e. Ben-oni means "Son of Sorrows").

A major advantage of The Bible for Home and School not found in most other books was that the reader would "read consecutively all the passages of Scripture which deal with each main epoch".⁹⁹ Children would therefore be able to grasp more fully not only the history of the reign of a particular king but also the prophecies and songs which the epoch called forth. Thus, the study of the reformation under Josiah became much more lively when incorporated with the relevant portions of Deuteronomy. Likewise, students were enabled to feel the repentent spirit and hope of the exiles by reading Psalm 40 and Jeremiah 52 along with II Kings 25.

The authors did not directly instruct their readers in the principles of biblical criticism, but they clearly

demonstrated that their work was based upon the conscientious study of the Bible "set forth in writings of English and German divines of acknowledged authority".¹⁰⁰ The Bible reflected for example critical opinion on the gradual development of Hebrew legislation in Part VI. There the editors presented to pupils a reading plan of passages beginning with the "Ten Words" of Exodus 20, moving through portions of the Levitical code and the Deuteronomic code, and concluding with sections dealing with the Levitical ritual. Bartlett and Peters firmly implied a contradiction of the conventional opinion that Moses was the author of this entire body of legislation. Farrar claimed that the reader, "without any formal indoctrination into even the elements of the higher criticism, may become aware of the different strata of enactments".¹⁰¹

The editors' sympathy with the higher criticism was also revealed in Part V of the book on "The History of the Jews from the Exile to Nehemiah". Along with those passages growing out of the historical demise of Babylon was included Isaiah 44 to 48. Those associated with the Return from Captivity included Isaiah 52, 61-62 and 65-66 as well as Ezra 1 and 2 and Psalms 98, 124, 126 and 129.

Portions of the Old Testament were also presented to young people as "Hebrew Tales", setting them apart from the historical and legislative material of the other chapters. These "Tales" included the story found in

Jonah, described by the editors as "A Parable of the Love of God towards the Gentiles Also", and also "The Wonderful Story of Daniel and his Friends". The latter set forth God's unfailing deliverance of those people who kept his law. Jonah and Daniel, as literally true and historically accurate books, were the prizes over which the traditionalists fought; the Bible's use of them as "tales" and "parables" again betrayed their editors' sympathies.

Edna Nixon and H.R. Steel's Bible Reader, in four parts, was designed along similar lines and intended for use by children. Part IV, an introduction to the teaching of the prophets, was primarily a class book to be used by older pupils, though the stories of the earlier prophets were said to be appropriate for younger age groups as well. Again the material was carefully selected and edited: The biblical accounts of the more insignificant kings who reigned after the division of the kingdom were omitted. A selection was also made from the Elisha stories, "those being taken which seem to have the greatest moral significance, and the shorter ones, which are of later origin, being omitted".¹⁰²

The selected readings from the Revised Version began with the reign of Solomon, and on the basis of the books of Kings, presented a historical survey to the Fall of Jerusalem. The prophetic selections were interspersed throughout the material in chronological sequence in accord with the new critical views of the prophetic books..

It was explained to the children that the books of Kings told the history of Israel from a religious point of view, having been written not long after the book of Deuteronomy was discovered by Josiah. The author had compiled a history with the purpose of enforcing the lessons of Deuteronomy: the need for a whole-hearted devotion to Jahweh as Israel's sole God, and centralized sacrificial worship. The theme of each lesson was illustrated primarily by selections either from Kings or one of the prophets, although relevant supplementary material from other books in the Bible or outside sources often lent a unity to the Scriptures and shed light on the passages being studied. The lesson on "Solomon in All His Glory" for example provided readings from several chapters in Kings as well as Matthew 6:29 and Canticles 3:6-11. The authors, while lacking the necessary opportunities to accomplish it themselves, claimed that it would be valuable for teachers to show as a counterpart to the story of Solomon the story of the choice of Paris and Herakles.¹⁰³

While it is not difficult to discover the emphasis, religious and moral or literary, in the educational writings of churchmen and teachers, the approaches were integrally related. The main difference lay in whether or not the underlying truth of a passage was directly taught to children, or whether children were immersed in the beauty of a passage and left to discover the truth for themselves. In many cases, teachers would use the

same material for either approach: the "stories" of Moulton's plan were the best source of human and divine truth according to Miss Houghton. Likewise the spiritually uplifting passages of the prophets were some of the most beautiful pieces of English literature. The religious purpose of teaching was never far from the minds of those who stressed the literary aspect of the Old Testament. Gladden for example, though encouraging teachers to investigate the literary form of the Scriptures, claimed that, "The spiritual and moral content of the Bible is always the main object of our study."¹⁰⁴ Raymond claimed that so far as the Bible was used in the education of the young, it must be used ultimately to strengthen and deepen the religious convictions of the next generation. Teachers and pupils could not help, in studying the literature of religious men and women, but gain insight into the nature of God and his relations with humanity.¹⁰⁵

Modern Scholarship and School Curriculum

The material suggested for use in biblical instruction was largely transformed as a result of the new attention given to the religious and literary aspects of the Old Testament. Dismissed as unsuitable were lesson plans which focused only on factual material in narratives or on stories of doubtful moral content. Lessons were graded according to the age of the pupils. When narratives

were studied, they were carefully selected and dealt with in a way which stressed more than geographical and historical details. The prophetic literature received a great deal of attention. Finally the teaching of the "assured results" of criticism was recommended at all age levels, but particularly for older students.

It had been shown that the spiritual development of Israel which had been revealed by critical investigation was in many ways akin to the development of a child into an adult personality. The material which reflected the stages of this development could be deliberately aimed at the most responsive age group. Young children for example could appreciate the primitive stories from an anthropomorphic stage while slightly older pupils could respond most readily to the narratives of the Mosaic and Davidic eras. Older pupils would be able to handle the more abstract spirituality of the prophets as they would have begun to pass in their own development from concrete to abstract thinking.¹⁰⁶ Peake made this idea of development in teaching central to his book on Reform in Sunday School Teaching. He stressed that revelation was a process in history setting out for teachers the lines on which the study of the Bible could be most successfully pursued. H. Craddock-Watson likewise asserted that the Old Testament was an ideal textbook, following as it did the development of a child's mind. Genesis presented nursery tales with a moral

content; Exodus spoke to the period of disciplined school life, while Judges, carefully edited, could inculcate feelings of loyalty and patriotism necessary for responsible citizenship. Rayment went so far as to conclude that,

Inattention to the child's point of view has not wrought quite so much mischief in this branch of teaching as in some other branches, for the simple reason that the Bible itself to a certain extent prevents teachers from going far wrong...It is no doubt roughly true that to follow the biblical order is to follow the child's order of development.¹⁰⁷

The details of a plan suggested by R.H. Kennett for teaching the Old Testament was repeated in general by most educators concerned with this particular problem. Teachers were encouraged to begin, with the very young, with the Creation story of Genesis and move on to the main stories about the Patriarchs. The Exodus and the wanderings in the wilderness were next with only a very general reference to the Tabernacle. The legal material was to be omitted. Teachers could pass quickly through Joshua and Judges, stressing only the progressive unification of Israel, and could devote more time to Samuel. The history of the kings of Judah and Israel was best seen in terms of the domination of foreign powers and the crisis of religious reform. Ezra and Nehemiah were too difficult to yield anything but short extracts, again carefully selected. The prophetic literature could then be dealt with along with a sketch of the compilation of the Pentateuch and an outline of

the history of the Maccabean age.¹⁰⁸

In the first place, suitable stories had to form the entire content of the course for young children of five and six. Though the Bible stories had often been abused and misinterpreted in the past, they were still the best vehicles for conveying the divine truth of God and for attracting the attention of children. The Genesis stories that told of God as the Maker of all things for example were quite in keeping with what was known of the ideas and inner needs of children of tender years.¹⁰⁹ Such stories were products of the childhood of the race; they would doubtlessly appeal to those in the early stages of life.

Several writers on religious education dealt with the question of how historicity with regards to the material in Genesis should be treated in the classroom. Miss Houghton for example suggested that, "To the very little child, the story should be simply told as the folk-tale that it is, with no thought to whether or not it is true, or in what sense it is true, or what it means."¹¹⁰ The significance of miracle and mythology could be dealt with at a later time, when the children began to study science. Adeney suggested that while the stories should not be given the same high recommendation to children as the Gospel stories, neither should they be pushed aside. They should be read to infants and children up to the age of seven or eight in their "quaint old-world simplicity."¹¹¹ F.C. Porter was in accord with Adeney

on this point: "Let the children read them as they are, but see that they seize upon their spirit so that if questions of fact afterward arise, they may feel that their treasure in the story does not depend upon the answer."¹¹² "Whether we regard the narrative as legendary or as strictly historical," claimed Raymont, "is a matter which need not trouble us: we may be quite satisfied if it rings morally true." A teacher should not set out to destroy the personality of Adam and Eve, or the childish conception of the Garden of Eden, any more than he should want to destroy the personalities of Christian and Hopeful, or dissolve Doubting Castle "into the baseless fabric of a dream."¹¹³

Reading the stories in their "old-world simplicity" meant of course that allusions to modern geographical and archaeological data should be forgotten. The stories had to remain within their own mystery with little comment from the teacher.¹¹⁴ The more intelligent and inquisitive children however could be told that these stories were "different" from some others that were found in the Bible. Children could be referred to the primitive uncertainty in which their own British history began as a comparable situation. They were capable of sensing even at a young age the basic fact that the Genesis stories were tales teaching some important truths, and were not necessarily accounts of the way things actually happened.

Porter, in his essay, recommended that children even at this stage be introduced in a very simple way to the various documents comprising the Pentateuch.¹¹⁵ This could be accomplished by reading the prophetic narrative apart from the priestly. Designed with this plan in mind was The Bible Story Re-told for Young People, edited by W.F. Adeney and W.H. Bennett. In this particular Bible the two narratives were separately presented in relation to the context out of which they grew. The earlier narratives were prefaced by a history of Israel down to the Fall of Jerusalem. The authors made it clear that certain truths about God and man, cast in the traditional story form, had been handed down through these momentous years. These were called, in The Bible Story, "Religious Stories of Ancient Israel". The authors introduced them by claiming that,

Next I want to tell you some of the stories through which the Israelites were taught many useful lessons, especially that their God Jehovah was the God of the whole world, and made men and women and all things. They are often thought to be rather poems or parables than history. The Babylonians had stories very much like these Israelite stories, only the Babylonian stories do not teach true and helpful lessons like those of the Bible.¹¹⁶

Then followed the earlier version of the Creation story, paraphrased for children. This was followed by other ancient stories including the Fall, the Flood and the Tower of Babel. A section later in the book then described the return from Exile, the rebuilding of the Temple and the work of Ezra and Nehemiah. This was the

period of the "New Israel", a period in which yet another set of religious stories were shaped and committed to writing. The children were introduced to the later version of the Creation story in the following manner:

God had taught the Jews more about Himself and His will than the ancient Israelites had known. So that it was natural that the Jews should tell the old stories in a new way, to teach the old lessons more clearly and forcibly and to teach new lessons as well.¹¹⁷

Although always told with a religious or moral truth in mind, stories from the Bible continued to be the best means of instruction for children from six to nine years of age. It was a stage of child development in which the memory became more retentive, and, therefore, in which teachers should encourage the memorization of Bible passages. Care however had to be taken "to prevent these tasks from becoming burdensome, and to exclude passages which are entirely beyond the child's comprehensions".¹¹⁸ The child at this point also began to distinguish the "true" from the "imaginary", but his liking for stories was not diminished.

should It was recommended that Bible teaching for this age group not differ materially from that of the previous stage, except that the stories be drawn from a broader period of Old Testament history and be free from that excessive simplification so necessary with very young children. "This is still the time for teaching by the 'golden method' of the story, which can now, however, be selected from a wider range."¹¹⁹ The Old Testament

particularly was "a marvellous store-house of material singularly suitable for the instruction of the young".¹²⁰ The concern however to teach moral and religious truth made it necessary that the stories be thoughtfully and carefully selected. Dismissed as unsuitable was the practice of beginning at Genesis and working straight through the historical material, and of focusing constantly upon the Exodus and settlement in Palestine as the most interesting parts of the Hebrew drama.¹²¹ One suggestion was that a teacher move through the Old Testament history as a whole, stopping at certain "centres of interest".¹²² These centers would of course focus upon certain facts, but they would be chosen because of their spiritual ideas or literary beauty. "As the teacher proceeds through the history of the Patriarchs and the Exodus and the Wanderings and the Entry, he will exercise a wide selection; not wasting time and energy on unimportant detail, but 'passing from peak to peak of the Bible history by a high-level route'."¹²³ As one author claimed, teachers must emphasize Elisha at Dothan rather than Elisha and the bears.¹²⁴ Peake also summarized the need for selection in his book on Reform in Sunday School Teaching:

It is quite clear that with the younger children the teaching should be of a less abstract character than with the older children...Yet if we are to have a connected system we ought to select the facts taught in the earlier stages with a view to the ideas that we hope to teach in the later. The theology in which we instruct them before they leave the Sunday School should be based on the facts which have engaged their thoughts in the earlier stages.¹²⁵

The natural course of the child's development between nine and twelve made it possible to place stories from the Old Testament into some kind of chronological framework. Bible teaching at this point was most profitably enhanced by map studies and geographical information. More important, children at this level were attracted to stories of stirring adventure and heroism as well as to accounts of the powerful monarchies of the ancient world and the rigid legalism of the Old Testament. The character studies in the Old Testament, with light thrown upon them from the New, were regarded as being of great help in training the moral character of young pupils.¹²⁶ By such stories the application to the child's own life could be made silently, without having his soul dragged into the light by the teacher.¹²⁷ The child for example who was inclined to be satisfied with religious emotion and observance instead of dutifulness in daily life could learn from Saul's example that "to obey is better than to sacrifice".¹²⁸ If it was suggested that such lessons could be just as easily attained through a study of the classics, the teacher's reply was that in no other stories was the tone so high and the religion so pure:

Take for example the comparison between the character of Jacob and that of Ulysses... Jacob is a deceiver, but the whole tone of the narrative goes against any approval of his deception, and we see him thwarted and deceived all his life afterwards, his sin working out its own punishment. Compare this with the picture of Ulysses as drawn by the Odyssey.¹²⁹

Finally, it was appropriate at this age level to familiarize pupils with the main outlines of Jewish history, stressing not minute details, but showing how the Hebrew people were gradually trained to become "the depositories of the Gospel revelation".¹³⁰

It was widely recognized therefore that the stories of the Bible were important to the religious education of children at least up to the age of twelve. How to tell them however in the light of modern biblical scholarship was a problem for teachers, and many educators recommended Miss Houghton's Telling Bible Stories as a useful aid. The author began with the basic premise that in the child one finds that which is truly human. One aspect of this humanity is a built-in God-consciousness, latent in every person. "The spontaneous instincts of the soul, as manifested in the child, are the essentially human instincts."¹³¹ This latent feeling for God however was planted in an atmosphere not very congenial to its development, and so was repressed. It was the task of religious education to reverse this situation and stimulate in the child that sense of God which was natural to him. The Old Testament was presented as the best tool for accomplishing this: "For if the child is the true representative of the human, so is the Old Testament the marvellous and accurate revelation of human nature in all its elemental characteristics."¹³²

The Old Testament was the product of a child-nation with a child-like character. Its appeal and value for

children could not be questioned. Israel had a child-like character which was spontaneous and impressionable, and which delighted in color, rhythm and imagination. Also, the God-consciousness of the Old Testament material was all-pervasive, making the book a good one for children. It told of a people with their face turned towards God, who related all mysteries of life to God. What could be more compelling to the unsophisticated human being whose capacity for knowing God remained natural and unspoiled? Moreover, the Old Testament reflected that progressive revelation of God which corresponded to a child's intellectual and emotional development.

Telling Bible Stories divided the biblical material into "morning stories", hero tales or epics, romance stories and purpose stories. The author advocated a graded system of stories beginning with the youngest children and the morning stories of Genesis, and working up to the purpose stories with older children who could deal with abstract concepts. The same material however could be used with varying age groups by exercising selectivity as to the points made and the details emphasized. The stories in the books of Samuel for example could in some instances be appreciated by children of five or six, but were mainly important as vehicles of certain universal truths for older pupils.¹³³ Samuel's anointing of David the shepherd boy would appeal to the very young; the skill involved in slaying Goliath, to the seven and eight year olds; the excitement of the

Philistines and the relevant topographical details to the nine and ten year olds; and the pathos of parting friends to the classes just prior to adolescence. The book did not give in exact words what was to be taught to the children, but instead encouraged teachers to discover the meaning of the stories for themselves, and then put the passages into their own words with the help of the Bible.

Parents and teachers were directed to surround the biblical epics such as that of Samson with spirituality. Certain parts of the story such as the loss of his hair and strength could be told to young children and could be left to make their own impression on the religious sensitivity of the hearers. With the older pupils, it was important to contrast such stories with the epics of other peoples. Samson, for example, with his seven labors, evoked memories of the twelve labors of Herakles. Also the Roman custom at the festival of Ceres was very much like the fox-hunt incident, and children could be sent to find such information in a local library. The teacher however had to make the unique religious value of the biblical epic the focal point of the lesson: Samson was never uncouth or vulgar; he showed a brave spirit amidst disappointment, and kept his trust in God, which had been kindled by a godly mother. Moreover, the story clearly contained hints of Jesus who, because he would save others, could not save himself.¹³⁴

With students from twelve to fifteen years of age,

the narrative material of the Old Testament could be studied in close detail, and could expand to include such topics as the politics of the great empires. Also frequently recommended with older pupils was a study of the prophetic literature. Churchmen and educators alike followed closely the dictum of George Adam Smith that the prophets had great meaning for nineteenth century man as a result of modern criticism.¹³⁵ In a discussion on Scripture teaching in girls' schools, it was commented:

When we come to the historical part of the Bible, illustrated from Psalms and prophets, our lessons become of increasing value for the older girls. Social questions press upon us and the future in regard to them depends upon a right attitude of mind towards them in the rising generation; and I can think of no way of securing this so effectively as the witness of the prophets...¹³⁶

A.F. Mitchell published a series of lessons on the use of the Old Testament in which he dealt with the problem of moral training in the classroom.¹³⁷ Few people, he claimed, were satisfied with the moral teaching given in the schools, and especially with how little attention was given to training young people in their civic and national duty, so important to a democratic society. Mitchell suggested the use of the prophecies of the Bible in correcting this situation for three reasons: (1) the sentiment of the prophets of Israel is akin to the democratic ideal; (2) the prophets are the pioneers of the idea of justice and the idea of liberty, and (3) the prophets are sufficiently removed

from contemporary politics to enable a teacher to speak without becoming entangled with his own party convictions. Mitchell provided lesson passages which were neither narrative nor biography, but rather speeches, meant to be read and if possible, learned by heart. Explanations of some literary and historical difficulties were to be given but were to be kept at a minimum, possibly no more than those provided by the Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges.

Miss Bramston structured her entire series of lessons around first the history of Israel, and then the prophets of Israel. It was in this latter area that teachers worked with material largely spiritual and moral, opening up many possibilities as well as difficulties in biblical theology. Also introduced more explicitly than ever before was modern thinking on the Bible resulting from critical investigation. Prophecy had received a whole new treatment, and this was communicated to pupils in biblical lessons. Taught to the students were some of the simple results of investigation into the prophetic literature such as the existence of Second Isaiah and the nature of the Deuteronomic Code.

In a book review in Life and Work it was claimed that, "Nothing in religious literature has been more remarkable than the awakened interest in the Old Testament prophets. Book after book is devoted to their exposition, to the modernising of their message, to the rescue of their magnificent eloquence from the sphere of the merely re-

sounding and vague..."¹³⁸ This was no less true of literature designed for use in schools and Sunday schools. Young people of course found guidance for the study of the prophets in the edited Bibles for schools such as Nixon and Steel's Bible Reader. Obscure language was made more comprehensible and random verses were given order and a historical context. But there were also popular aids which focused particularly upon the Old Testament prophets and their work.

One popular volume was Alexander Wilson's The Prophets and Prophecy to the Close of the Eighth Century B.C., published in 1903. Life and Work claimed of the author and his work that, "The minister of Ythan Wells has contributed an excellent little book to this great and growing literature. His purpose is to interest children and young people in the prophets as brave men who lived in communion with God and did not hesitate to point out the evils of their time."¹³⁹ Wilson wished to interest Bible-class pupils in the Old Testament prophets by providing teachers with current information on the true nature of prophecy. The book was couched in simple terms, but Wilson nevertheless boldly delved into the areas of biblical criticism and Assyriology.

Central to Wilson's book was the belief that the prophets were inspired pioneers in the religious development of Israel. They were inspired to call men to a more exalted, spiritual view of God rather than to a forgotten legislation. In this sense one could see the prophets

as forerunners of Christ, hinting clearly at his message and the conflicts which it brought. Also important to Wilson was the fact that this concept of the prophets could be taught to children. Answered affirmatively was the latter half of the question:

Must religious instruction in the Old Testament be confined to the stories of the Patriarchs and of the kings of Israel and Judah, or can children be taught to find Christ in the Old Testament, in those parts of it where the promise of him is most plain and unmistakable?¹⁴⁰

Rev. A. Nunzies, author of the introduction, continued:

"It seems right that this view should now be communicated to the young; since, if it is not, they must either be taught a view of the Old Testament which they will ere long discover to be untrue, or must be withheld from studying the Old Testament."¹⁴¹

The new views however were not to be harshly obtruded into the minds of the pupils. Teachers should absorb the background material on the nature of prophecy, Assyrian and Babylonian history and archaeology, and the prophetic literature. The main task of the teacher in the classroom was to let pupils know that the prophets were men who had deep insight into right and wrong, and who did not hesitate to point out the sins of their countrymen. Both this courage and insight came from communion with God.

Wilson made, for teachers, the important point that to the modern mind prophecy became credible or incredible only insofar as it was brought into touch with the present.

If children and young people could see in it the working of present laws and additional instances of what was taking place in modern times, then they would take it seriously. "Prophecy, in order to commend itself to the modern mind, must be an extension into the past of what is found in the present."¹⁴² Popular Christian teaching in the past had almost wholly neglected these books, and the teaching of children was no exception. They were taught stories of the Creation, the Fall, the Deluge and the Patriarchs, but the lessons for the most part ended there. It was now realized however that the prophets spoke a message appropriate to any time.

Wilson provided questions on prophecy at the conclusion of the book which were intended for use with students. Even in the traditional method of question and answer, the conventional views on prophecy were overturned:

Q. What is a prophet?

A. A man that speaks for God. God speaks to the prophet, then the prophet explains or interprets to the people what God says. Predicting the future is not necessarily a part of a prophet's work. A prophet was a forth-teller, not a fore-teller - one who told forth to the world what God had revealed or told to himself. The prophet made clear to the world the truths of righteousness which God had implanted in the prophet's own heart.¹⁴³

Similar in purpose and approach was a volume on The Work of the Prophets by Rose E. Selfe. It appeared in a series of "Simple Guides to Christian Knowledge", the aim of which was "to provide a graduated course of theological study which will be intelligible and interesting to children and young people".¹⁴⁴ The subjects covered

were treated simply but in accord with the teaching of the Church of England and "the assured results of the best biblical and historical criticism". Teachers were encouraged to place the books in the hands of their pupils. Much more so than Wilson's publication, The Work of the Prophets appealed directly to the interests and concerns of young people. The Primitive Methodist Quarterly Review claimed that, "The present volume is simply written and will serve as an admirable introduction to the modern study of the prophets."¹⁴⁵

The author began by explaining to her young readers that they were about to learn about the work of the prophets. They must ask, therefore, who and what the prophets were as well as why they lived. They were then directed to the series of paintings of the prophets reproduced throughout the book. These were "sad and earnest looking men" who arouse our curiosity by their unusual dress and attitudes. The prophets were well-known and loved by Jesus, yet most modern people knew little about them. Young people were familiar with names such as Isaiah or Daniel, but they had no idea of the message of the prophets or of their meaning for people in 1904.

Miss Selfe went on to explain to her readers that the prophets were men who lived very close to God and so saw the events going on around them through his eyes. It was a common mistake to think that a prophet mainly told people what was going to happen in the future. The prophets very often did foretell future events, but this was only

natural since they were taught by God to understand the meaning of their present situation; they were thus more likely to know what the future would bring forth. What young people should remember was the courage of the prophets: they delivered their messages even when it displeased kings and put their own lives in danger.¹⁴⁶

The understanding of the prophet as social reformer and messenger stemmed of course from the literary and historical investigation of the Old Testament. The communication of this idea to young people was encouraged, especially in works such as those mentioned above. But what of the more specific results of higher criticism such as the dating of some of the prophetic material? A significant number of works also dealt with the "assured results" of the critics in ways which attempted not to offend but to stimulate faith.

In a chapter on the prophet Isaiah, Wilson taught his readers that the prophecies of the book were first delivered orally and were written down only years later in their present form. In the process of copying during this interval, prophecies of different dates and different authors frequently were inscribed onto the same parchment. As a result, pupils found prophecies of earlier and later dates side by side. Wilson claimed that, "Isaiah is not the author of the whole book called by his name. Chapters xl to lxvi were not written till the people of Judea had been carried into Captivity, 150 years after Isaiah's day. The greater part, however, of chapters i to xxxix is the work of the prophet."¹⁴⁷ Miss Selfe

likewise commented upon the eighth century prophet from Jerusalem: "This prophet was Isaiah, who gives his name to one of the longer books in our Bible. There are sixty-six chapters in this book, but the last twenty-seven were not written by Isaiah. Later on, we must consider the second part of the book."¹⁴⁸

In another chapter Miss Selfe dealt with Second Isaiah more fully for her young readers. She approached the topic by saying that along with Ezekiel there was another great prophet of the Exile about whom we knew nothing, not even his name. At one time people believed that Isaiah was the author of these prophecies, as all the work was bound together, but we now know that this was not the case. The most important thing about this prophet however was his message, which heralded deliverance and praised the greatness of God. The prophet had created some of the most beautiful passages in the Bible which were especially significant for those who believed in Jesus.

R.C. Gillie, in an interesting book for young people on the prophets, even set out some of the arguments by which the conclusion of Second Isaiah had been reached. A review of the book promised that, "though biblical criticism is not mentioned, the young reader gets the benefit of its well-ascertained results."¹⁴⁹ In God's Lantern Bearers he wrote to his readers,

It would not be easy for you to understand all the reasons which have convinced so many people, but you will wish to hear some of them.

First of all there is no name at the head of these later chapters to tell us the author, while in various places in the earlier chapters Isaiah tells us himself that he spoke them. Next, all these later prophecies refer to a time one hundred and fifty years after Isaiah lived, yet the writer refers to many events as if they already happened. He even mentions Cyrus, the great king of Persia by name.¹⁵⁰

Isaiah was not the only prophetic book which received simple but critical treatment in the material for the classroom. Miss Selfe introduced children to Jonah in her work as a book not by a prophet but about a prophet:

It is as truly inspired by God as any other prophetic writing, but it may be an allegory or a parable rather than a story of what actually happened. You know how very common it is in Eastern countries for teachers to use stories or parables to convey the lessons they want their disciples to learn...In our readings from the prophets we have again and again found that the messages were sent to them in some outward form; they are bidden to do some symbolic act or they are taught some truth by a vision which they describe as if they had actually seen it with their bodily eyes. The writer of the Book of Jonah describes the prophet as having passed through various experiences, which God had prepared for him, and by these experiences having been taught by God great spiritual truths. Whether the events actually happened or not does not affect the truth and deep meaning of the story.¹⁵¹

She went through the details of the story first, and then discussed with pupils the meaning of the allegory: the fact that God's mercy extended to all nations, and that he expected more goodness and service from those nations which had greater advantages.

One more book was included in the prophetic literature by Miss Selfe, the Book of Daniel. This was a work familiar to most children. They may even have wondered in fact why Daniel was not considered long before this

point in her story. She gave the following explanation: "This book, like the book of Jonah, was not written by the prophet whose name it bears. It was written very much later than any of the other prophecies we have been considering - about one hundred and sixty years before Christ."¹⁵² The historical situation out of which the book grew was explained to the young readers, and then the deeper meaning underlying the chapters. The stories of the first six chapters were meant to encourage the martyrs and patriots in their sufferings: "These stories, like the story of Jonah, may not be literally true. That makes no difference to the value of them. They show us how God helps and sustains his followers in danger and temptation..."¹⁵³

The second part of the Book of Daniel contained visions of the future, often obscure for young readers. Again the message was directed towards those in difficulty: God was still in control of human affairs and would some day deliver his people. The attention of the children was directed to the reproduction of a painting from the Chapel of the Ascension in London of Daniel carrying a globe mounted by a cross and surrounded by tranquil beasts. The picture symbolized God's rule over all the earth as well as the fact that some day the heathen nations would be subject to the Almighty Creator. The book recommended that teachers and pupils should not consider these chapters in detail, but should only stress certain parts such as the prayer in the ninth chapter or the

verse on the resurrection of the dead in the twelfth.

The introduction of some critical conclusions therefore was seen as being closely linked with effective teaching on the prophets or on the biblical history. Many teachers and churchmen alike were convinced that children could become acquainted with critical principles. They could easily discover for themselves double narratives or contradictions in legal principles such as those on sacrifice in Samuel or Deuteronomy at an early age. Children between nine and twelve, or even earlier, would also be delighted with some account of how the books of the Bible were collected, translated and preserved. Photographs of old manuscripts, descriptions of the sacred rolls and supplementary lessons on the gradual popularizing of the Bible from Wycliff and Luther down to the work of the Bible Society would provide very good material.¹⁵⁴ By the time a pupil reached the age of thirteen or fourteen he should have had some formal contact with the general results of modern biblical investigation. These were regarded as consisting mainly of the following theories:

- (1) The Bible is a compilation of many different books written at different times.
- (2) God has gradually taught men about himself. Man's response to this teaching has also been gradual.
- (3) The Bible contains mistakes in history and science but not in religious truth.
- (4) The prophets were spokesmen for God to their own day.

With children up to the age of twelve, attention was to be focused on the moral and religious truth of the

Scriptures which pointed to Jesus, or upon the literary beauty of the Old Testament. It was generally agreed that the more detailed criticism of the biblical documents, if ever taught in the classroom, must be reserved for more advanced pupils both in age and ability. Very little really should be said to pupils until they were in full possession of the main facts of the biblical history and had also learned to use them profitably. Canon R.H. Kennett declared that, "To hear J's and E's and P's and D's dropping from the lips of those who are spiritually mere babes and sucklings is to me almost as painful as it would be to hear in an infant school a debate on the divorce laws."¹⁵⁵ Too often he claimed the interest of young boys in the higher criticism was like their interest in a jigsaw puzzle, an unprofitable and unreasonable study without a true appreciation of the soul of the Bible. Children had to know something of the contents and structure of the Bible and to appreciate its divine message before more details of the higher criticism could be presented. At the Conference on Scripture Teaching held at Cambridge in 1912, it was claimed that:

When therefore we try to teach the elements of the higher criticism, we must not do so to persons completely ignorant...of what the Bible contains; nor in such a manner as to let them imagine that we do not regard ~~it~~ at all - Old and New Testament alike - as containing a divine message. We may have to read it by a new light, but unless the message is there for us to read, the Bible would be of little service.¹⁵⁶

Introducing even advanced pupils to Old Testament scholarship required care and discrimination on the part of the teacher. It was neither impossible nor undesirable however to introduce higher criticism to older pupils.

that The boy can see, if we let him use his eyes, the sin did not come into the world because of the Fall, but that the beautiful story of the Fall was made to explain the existing fact of sin...The boy can understand, if we will let him, that the elaborate sacrificial ordinances of the Pentateuch are an idealised picture drawn by a post-exilic hand to emphasize the Holiness of God; that if all the sacrifices had been offered at the altar in Jerusalem in the manner enjoined, the Holy City would be been reduced to shambles...¹⁵⁷

Teachers were encouraged once again to think of the "assured results" of biblical criticism, listed by the 1912 Conference as being:

- (1) The Old Testament documents were compiled in their present form at a late date.
- (2) The Law has been built up over centuries from various strata.
- (3) There is a primitive and later history of Israel, the latter being coloured by the priestly circle.
- (4) The main source of information before the 9th century B.C. was oral tradition. The solid ground of written material is not reached until the time of David.
- (5) The religion of Israel before the appearance of the literary prophets was closer to that of kindred nations than previously supposed.

aged N.P. Wood, an Assistant Master at Bishop's Stortford College, set up a lesson plan for boys/fifteen to sixteen on "How to Read the Bible".¹⁵⁸ He described his

goal in the following words: "My plan is to tackle critical questions directly, instead of dealing with them in our stride, so to speak...We have to remember that several boys leave school between sixteen and seventeen, and that therefore several never reach the Sixth Form. What I want to do with this type of boy, of whom I get several, is to give them a simple suggestion of the meaning of biblical criticism."¹⁵⁹ Wood's lessons began with the Creation story and, on the basis of the double narrative found there, outlined a complete but simple study of the documents of the Pentateuch. He introduced the concept of documents within Genesis in this manner:

First Lesson: For a first lesson, begin with some Socratic questioning as to the nature of the Bible. It's an English translation of a very old collection of books, written at different times, by different authors, and in different languages. Further, in several books, we see that different authors have been at work. The boys know this is true, at any rate, of Psalms and Proverbs. Then get the form to read for homework the first two chapters of Genesis, and tell them to see whether they can find any signs of two different stories. Tell them to look out for a division in the fourth verse of the second chapter.

Second Lesson: Deal with these two chapters. Ask boys to state what differences they have seen between the two stories - at any rate, they will have discovered some differences. Ask enough questions, till you have got the main differences on the blackboard - differences in order of creation, that is, re language, and style, and purpose. Boys can see this sort of point. As to language, for instance, when once they have seen that two names are used for the Deity, they will soon find out that man is "created" in one story and "formed" in the other. As to purpose, the master will have

to summarise the differences by some such phrases as 'attempt at science', and 'attempt at philosophy'. The boys will tell him that the second story aims at accounting for the origin of pain and toil, and he can then tell them that the discussion of such different questions belongs to 'philosophy'. Lastly, introduce the symbols P and J. Ask the form which story seems earlier. You will get some curious answers of course!

Third Lesson: More about the two Creation stories - where did P's story come from? Compare it with the Babylonian stories. Ask the form whether the story of Apsu and Tiamat seems, without any cant, on a higher or on a lower plane than P's story. Talk about strata in Genesis - more duplication of stories occurs, e.g. Abraham twice, Isaac once, passes off his wife as his sister. Tell them that this sort of thing happens through many books of the Old Testament.

The lessons went on to cover such topics as progressive revelation, anthropomorphism, the problem of literary copyright in the ancient world, the development of Israel's legal system and finally the nature and significance of the prophetic message. After the final lesson, Wood suggested a rapid review of Old Testament history which should include some mention of the publication of Deuteronomy, an event which could only be appreciated after some knowledge of literary criticism. He concluded: "It is not the only plan; it may very likely not be the best one; but in some way or other we must succeed in teaching middle-form boys how to read the Bible, for the method can be taught nowhere else so well as at school."¹⁶⁰

Another interesting attempt to teach directly the conclusions of the higher criticism to young people was

made in a book by M. Cyril Bickersteth. Although directed towards his own nephew and godson, the volume was intended to aid parents and teachers in presenting the Old Testament to pupils between the ages of ten and sixteen. The book was acclaimed by The Guardian as "an honest and courageous attempt to guide a schoolboy to a more intelligent study of the Old Testament".¹⁶¹ With great clarity, Bickersteth described the differences between the biblical narratives, always maintaining a reverent tone in his instruction. He "wisely" refrained from raising questions as to the precise historical value of the patriarchal narratives, and wrote with simplicity and straightforwardness on morally dubious narratives.

One letter specifically dealt with the Flood narratives, and introduced directly the documentary hypothesis as formulated by the critics to account for the divergent stories. Bickersteth began by pointing out to his godson the remarkable resemblance between the Hebrew story and those told by nearly every other ancient civilization. The Holy Spirit had however guided the writers of the Bible so that they were able to purify the ancient traditions and preserve the spiritual truth that God punishes the wicked and saves the righteous who trust in him. Bickersteth then suggested that it was not the facts of the story but this spiritual truth that was most important for children to remember. In fact, the details of the story varied from verse to verse:

No doubt the common tradition of a flood was based upon a fact; but we need not believe that even the Bible account is literally true in all its details, or that the Flood covered the whole earth. Indeed, if you read the chapter very carefully you will see that there are two different accounts woven together, and they do not exactly agree.

Probably the earliest account is contained in these verses: vi.1-8; vii.1-5,7-10,12,16-17,22,23; viii.2b,3a,6-12,13b,20-22; but there is combined with it a much later account, which was probably not composed, or at least not written down, till the time of the Exile - i.e. 500 years before Christ.

Hebrew scholars and those whose business it is to study and compare the languages of the Bible very carefully, are often able to distinguish the different parts, sometimes even of a single verse. This passage is one of those which, like the two accounts of Creation in chapters one and two, enable most anybody to see the two different sources as clearly as one can see two threads of different colours combined into one piece of string.

Now these two different stories do not exactly agree. One of them tells us that Noah took two animals of each sort, the other that he took seven. According to one the Flood lasted only sixty-eight days, according to the other more than a year.¹⁶²

In the lesson schemes for older children, an integral part of any work done on literary criticism was a thorough and critical look at the history of Israel. As an essay by Lyman Abbott in The Bible and the Child claimed, in order to explain to adolescents what modern scholars thought about the construction and growth of the Old Testament, they had to be told something of ancient history and the growth of nations.¹⁶³ The essay recommended that pupils be taught Old Testament history on the basis of the following sketch of the history of Israel in order to prepare them for the higher criticism:

Before the rise of the Greek and Roman civilizations, there was a people in slavery in Egypt who were set free by a series of "remarkable incidents". After crossing the Red Sea and encamping in Arabia, their prophet and leader, Moses, gave them a constitution which is known as the Book of the Covenant, and which is now found in Exodus 20-23. In an age when superstition abounded, their belief in one righteous God who demanded righteousness from his people deserves to be labelled as radical. After spending a number of years in the wilderness, the Israelites campaigned against Canaan and embarked upon three hundred years of colonial days, the story of which is told in Judges and Samuel. Finally, a monarchy was established to overcome jealousy and strife. Teachers were directed to the books of Kings and Chronicles for their information on the monarchies, the division of the kingdom and the dispersion of Judah, and lastly the captivity of Israel.

It should be made clear to students that during the progress of this history, there were two religious forces at work, forces which could be characterized as an ecclesiastical or priestly faction and a non-ecclesiastical or prophetic faction. The essay pointed out that in every church and every community these elements, whether separated or intermingled, could be found. In the history of the Israelites, the tradition of the non-ecclesiastical party which had descended from Moses was embodied in the Book of Deuteronomy, a book which

had little to say about church observances and much about personal righteousness. Alongside of the Mosaic party grew a body of people who, from the earliest times, expressed their religious sentiments with sacrifices. These sacrifices gradually became more elaborate as the centuries passed. The code which accompanied this development was finally embodied in the Book of Leviticus, although it also appeared throughout Genesis and Exodus as well.

Aside from essays and articles such as that of Abbott's, teachers were most often referred to the textbooks of T.C. Fry and W.F. Burnside for assistance with Old Testament history.¹⁶⁴ Both histories, entitled Old Testament History for Schools, assumed critical methods and results and, while not wishing to bewilder pupils with the more elaborate details of criticism, attempted to make the essentials of history familiar to them in such a way that the reading of critical works would not be harmful to their faith in later life.

Fry's book however did succumb to the pitfalls of the "recast narrative". Much of the literary charm of the Old Testament narrative, so important in the teaching of children and young people, was lost in the work. Also, Fry's constantly recurring hints at the unhistorical character of some narratives failed to adequately deal with the childish question, "Is it true?". And as the religious and moral truth of the passages was not a point of emphasis in such an approach, the confusion over his-

toricity was likely to have been even more acute. As The Guardian rightly pointed out,

Dr. Fry's method is to leave the student throughout in a haze or rather a thick fog as to what is fact and what is fiction. He tells us that in the story of Elisha, 'the marvellous is dwelt on for its own sake'. But the boy wants to know whether it is true - that is, if he is old enough to ask any such question; if not, he wants to know the purpose of the story as he reads it.¹⁶⁵

Burnside made more use of the actual text of the Old Testament interspersed with his own narrative, and took a more definite though cautious stand on the historicity of the material. While the story of the flight from Egypt was true in outline, however, it was impossible to follow the route of the Israelites with any certainty, as well as to trust the record when it came to estimating the number of escaped slaves. Burnside's moderate tendencies also appeared in his affirmation of the truth of the patriarchal narratives and of the belief that Abraham differed from other Semites in his knowledge and worship of one God.

Two series of commentaries on the books of the Bible intended for use primarily in the classroom were the Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges and Rivingtons' Books of the Bible. Even the more conservative periodical The Christian was sympathetic to the Cambridge series, describing it as a very valuable series which included some volumes ranking with the best scholarly commentaries.¹⁶⁶ Both The Christian however and The Church Times complained of the advanced approach which the editors adopted

towards the higher criticism: "At the same time, one cannot but regret that the Newer Criticism is so prominently advocated in a commentary which is professedly designed for young and inexperienced readers."¹⁶⁷

Skinner's volume on Isaiah 40 through 66 was particularly significant in introducing an advanced line of thinking into the classroom. Skinner not only advocated a late date for the chapters, but concurred with the view of Duhm and Cheyne that Second Isaiah did not extend beyond chapter 55, the rest of the book being the work of another author.

Rivingtons' Books of the Bible, acclaimed as sober, scholarly and cheap, were also noted for their critical frankness. On the Book of Amos one review claimed, "Indeed many who are acquainted with Driver, Robertson Smith and G.A. Smith may find an advantage in glancing through the notes of Mr. Burrows to impress the main results of critical study upon the mind. Young students will obtain an inkling at least of what may safely be admitted by a conservative criticism."¹⁶⁸ Certainly the volume on Genesis, edited by T.C. Fry, was bold in propagating the results of the critics who had "finished their task so far as the Pentateuch was concerned".¹⁶⁹ Fry was convinced that the only way of preventing the skepticism common to early manhood was with plain speaking on the higher criticism. In introductory material on the book Fry described the documents and their basic characteristics as discerned by the critics. Also

emphasized was the religious rather than factual truth of Genesis:

The chronology must not be considered scientific or historical...The Bible was, we can now see, not meant to teach us such things. It contains the literature of a nation through whom God has willed to teach the world by progressive stages, the highest and truest religion. Chronology, geography and science are not religious truth.¹⁷⁰

If teachers followed the suggested lesson schemes for infants through young adults, it was believed that biblical instruction would undergo a transformation, providing eventually for the introduction of higher critical principles. As children grew out of the golden age of story-telling and began to distinguish "truth" as opposed to "fiction", however, the difficulties of the teacher increased in number and magnitude. Older children were bound to query the value of material which teachers could not positively identify as "true". They would also inevitably question the miracle narratives after being exposed to the science and history lessons of the day. They could not help notice, in reading the Bible for themselves, that the moral standards of some of the Old Testament were contrary to those stressed in the classroom. How then could a teacher prepare for these particular difficulties of immorality and historicity? What guidance did the manuals and textbooks of the day give to pupils on these matters?

The question of miracles and how to treat them for example was widely recognized as a complex one, and teachers

were generally encouraged either to avoid such material, or not to insist upon its literal accuracy. One article suggested that as little prominence as possible be given to the incidents of a supernatural kind contained in the biblical narratives. "A child's mind," it was asserted, "accustomed to the miraculous tales of ancient Greece and Rome, is not impressed with the same kind of phenomenon when he meets with it in the Bible, and he will find it very difficult to reconcile these infractions of the natural law with the theory that he has been taught elsewhere that God's will is manifested in law and order."¹⁷¹ Certainly the "wonder element" in miracles was not to be over-emphasized with children, yet many educators believed that a frank discussion of the miracle stories would prepare children to face the skepticism which they were likely to meet in higher education or at work. Miss Houghton suggested that if such material was used, a discussion on the purpose and validity of miracles should be conducted for advanced age groups. With younger children however the stories should be read without comment.¹⁷² Another educator concluded that in dealing with the miraculous element,

Whatever may be our own individual faith, let us follow our Master's example, and, while yielding to the childish love for 'signs and wonders', never rest till we have drawn out the inner spiritual meaning of each, and successfully appealed to that intuition of moral truth latent in the youngest and most ignorant. The innate truth and beauty of Christianity, once deeply felt, are never lost, and have nothing to fear from the disproving of this or that special incident.¹⁷³

This idea was elaborated upon by H. Craddock-Watson at the 1913 conference on Scripture teaching. The spiritual atmosphere of each miracle was to be emphasized; in teaching a lesson on the feeding of the multitudes for example the teacher was advised to note the introductory statement, "He had compassion on the people". Miracles such as that of the coin in the fish's mouth or the man in the linen cloth who fled away naked, while arousing great interest in a class, did not raise religious questions. The real question was, "Do we believe Jesus turned sinners into saints?" rather than, "Did he turn water into wine?".¹⁷⁴

G.C. Bell, in Religious Teaching in Secondary Schools, encouraged teachers to follow a scientific approach in considering miracles by first looking at the credibility of miracles in general, and then at the arguments in support of particular miracles. In general, one could say that for adequate moral reasons God may supersede the action of his ordinary "laws" of nature by higher "laws" as yet unknown to common experience.¹⁷⁵ In a world of science where a miracle was much more difficult to conceive of, doubts were legitimate. Yet, he suggested, in the end miracles may prove to be stepping stones rather than stumbling blocks, carrying men beyond the limits of a mechanical and material universe to a higher philosophy.¹⁷⁶ In discussing and estimating the credibility of particular miracles therefore, teachers should not say "miracles never happen", but should consider the

nature and adequacy of the testimony to them, and also the adequacy of their moral purpose.¹⁷⁷ Many of the Old Testament miracles such as those wrought by Samson or Elisha did of course lack a convincing moral content and a reliable testimony; yet the rejection of such events did not mean the demise of Christianity: "The belief of most educated Christians in the truth of Christianity would not be in any way undermined by proof (if such were possible) that some of the Old Testament miracles were not supported by sufficient testimony to make them accepted as historical facts."¹⁷⁸ "Revealed religion," it was also claimed, "is not a riot of miracles, great and small, as some would seem to think, all of which must be unquestioningly believed as 'necessary to salvation'."¹⁷⁹

Bickersteth took this same approach in dealing with the story of Jonah. It would be, he declared, very wrong and foolish to say that such a thing could not happen. All things were possible with God, and many wonderful things happened every day which the wisest men could neither understand nor explain. It was best to say that the story was not impossible and may be quite true, but it was certainly not to be made an article of faith.¹⁸⁰ On the story of Balaam's ass he again claimed that while we must never say that it was impossible,

we need not be surprised or disconcerted if good evidence is forthcoming to show that some unhistorical additions have crept into the sacred text. Miracles are possible, but

they are not very common, and in early days people thought they were very much more common than they were.¹⁸¹

Another point of difficulty was the veracity of stories such as those of the patriarchs who appeared not only to play a key role in the entire salvation drama, but about whom there was considerable dispute in the world of scholarship. Most popular publications for teachers and pupils were in agreement with the attitude taken by A.F. Kirkpatrick at the 1907 Church Congress where he spoke on "How to Teach the Old Testament": "Does it make any real difference to us if some features in the portraiture are tribal or national, rather than strictly individual? If, in fact, there is some element of idealisation in the narrative? Truth of idea has its place in education as well as truth of fact."¹⁸²

Miss Houghton claimed that as classes moved from the early mythological chapters of Genesis, they would instinctively become aware that from chapter 11 on, they were dealing with stories more in keeping with their experience of contemporary literature. In these patriarchal "incidents" children would read about men of national importance in a literary form not unlike that found in other cultures. The question of fact had fallen into the background for the writer and the ancient Israelites, and it must do so for the teacher as well. The essential purpose of the Abraham stories, the revelation of the fact of one God and one nation, had operated in the selection and circulation of this material; it

must continue to do so even in the modern classroom.¹⁸³

Von Oort's Bible dealt with the problem of legend and historicity more directly. In a chapter on "The Patriarchs in General" he claimed, "Before we begin examining the stories about them, we must stop a moment to consider whether we have got the firm ground of reality beneath our feet, or are still wandering in the realm of legend."¹⁸⁴ Von Oort and his collaborator took the fairly radical line that the stories concerning the patriarchs referred not so much to men as to groups of nations or single tribes. "Abram, for instance, represents a great part of the Terachites; Lot, the Moabites and Ammonites; whose ancestor he is called; Ishmael, certain tribes of Arabia; Isaac, Israel and Edom together; Jacob, Israel alone, while Jacob's twelve sons stand for the twelve tribes of Israel."¹⁸⁵ The editors briefly reviewed the grounds for this assertion, including the fact that the idea of representing a nation or tribe as a man was very common in ancient times. Yet they left a question mark for readers over the value of these legends in providing accurate information about the peoples of the pre-Mosaic period. It was certainly possible that some historical material had been preserved, accounts such as that embodying the recollection that the tribe of Joseph paved the way to Egypt for the other tribes.¹⁸⁶

While the historicity of the patriarchs was still a matter of debate in scholarly works, even the most conservative critics agreed that the first chapters of Genesis

contained material that was mythological. How this material was to be approached in the classroom, especially with older children, was also an issue which had to be considered. As suggested above, the "morning stories" of the human race could be told without note or comment to younger children; the question of truth however grew more acute with those who were beginning to study science in the classroom. Most educators agreed with J.P. Smyth that teachers should not try to create doubts in the minds of their pupils, but rather should clear up their misapprehensions as to the nature and purpose of the early chapters of the Bible. In his Bible for the Young, Smyth stressed that the traditional date of 4004 B.C. for the creation of the world was not a part of the Bible but was a purely human conjecture:

Tell the children to draw a pencil mark through that 4004; and in future when you read of the millions of years that go to make a limestone rock, and the millions of years that may go to make a planet...remember that the Bible puts no difficulty in your path by setting limits to the time. This marvellous old creation story simply says, 'In the beginning', which may have been thousands, or millions or billions of years ago...¹⁸⁷

Instead of stating that the Creation story was "not true", its spiritual as opposed to scientific and historical purpose had to be constantly reviewed. This was a task made all the more easy if the new approach to biblical instruction had been followed in the lower forms. Bickersteth wrote on Genesis to his godson:

In the margin of the Authorised Version (not the R.V.) you will see the date 4004. That is certainly a mistake and I have no doubt at all that the creation of the world took place very many thousand years before that...God did not inspire the sacred writer to tell us the wonderful things about successive stages, which have been discovered by geologists and other scientific men in later times. It was enough that he saw clearly the loving purpose of Almighty God, and understood that He was above all and through all and in all.¹⁸⁸

Von Oort's Bible was one of the few publications which attempted to explain to young people the nature of "myth" and "legend" in conjunction with the early chapters of Genesis. Using the example of the legend of the Drachenfels describing the conquest of Christianity over heathenism in Germany, he defined legend for his readers as every narrative which is not trustworthy, but which is nevertheless given as history.¹⁸⁹ Myths were included in this category as stories in which the powers or phenomena of nature are introduced as agents. Particularly important for older pupils to realize was that the myths or legends of the Old Testament told little about the times they described but a great deal about the times in which they were conceived:

It stands to reason that we must go back to work with the utmost caution in drawing our inferences from a legend, or using it as a contribution to our knowledge of the past. For as a rule it teaches us nothing about the period in which it places us, but does teach us something about that in which it was invented, or in which it sprang up.¹⁹⁰

This realization was reflected in material both for teachers and pupils in that the Creation and Fall stories

were either taught or read, not at the beginning of a course of religious instruction, but in conjunction with the appropriate parts of the history of Israel in which they originated. C.G. Montefiore, in his Bible for Home Reading, recognized that while the stories merited devotion and respect, they could only be understood if taken from their place at the beginning of the Bible. He placed the creation narratives after the age of Nehemiah, when the compiler of Genesis, using the priestly document as his framework, included the two accounts of the origins of man and the world. Each account, it was pointed out, reflected the views on God and man dominant at the time.

Teachers were, then, given some guidance as to how to treat the problem of historical accuracy in relation to many of the Old Testament records. Generally speaking they were advised to follow two basic principles: they were to concentrate on the religious and moral truth of the narratives so that the children, if and when they discovered the factual material to be inaccurate, would not have their faith shaken. Secondly, they were to make certain that their teaching was thorough and sincere. Teachers who could not hold to scientific and historical infallibility should not be forced to teach such tenets by School Boards or by parents. Similarly, teachers who could accept the traditional views on the Bible should not be forced to teach critical views, but instead should concentrate on the spiritual truths of the Scriptures

and welcome any discussion on the problems of historicity. "We are not bound to teach all we believe," claimed an article in The Journal of Education, "but let us have too much self-respect to teach anything we do not believe."¹⁹¹ J.P. Smyth spoke eloquently on this problem in his Bible for the Young, in dealing with whether or not the Fall in Genesis is an exact and factual account:

If you believe that it is, tell the child so. But do not be afraid to tell him also that there are good and holy and scholarly men who think that it may have been told in the form of an allegory, like the parable of the Prodigal Son, and that God has not given us sufficient grounds for deciding with certainty which view is correct.¹⁹²

Apart from determining the accuracy of biblical facts, the teacher was also faced with the problem of the immorality and cruelty of the Old Testament. It was true that this material could, to some extent, be avoided in a carefully planned syllabus for younger children. Montefiore's Bible for Home Reading omitted morally offensive stories such as Elisha and the bears, or else pointed out to young readers that the material was fictional in nature, as in the case of the historian's estimate of King Jehu.¹⁹³ Montefiore supported the idea that while it mattered little whether a statement implied to be historically true was really historically false, great injury was done if a statement believed to be morally wrong was implied to be true.¹⁹⁴ Selected syllabuses and expurgated Bibles however could only go so far in dealing with the difficulties of immorality; older pupils

especially who were studying the Bible for themselves and who were being exposed to the growing secularist press needed a more thorough solution. Teachers therefore were advised, as in N.P. Wood's plan for teaching the Old Testament to boys, to acquaint older children with the idea of progressive revelation. Bickersteth confronted the story of Deborah and Jael directly, pointing out to his young readers that the Bible here appears to sanction an act of which our consciences disapprove. Both Deborah and Jael had however attained to very imperfect levels of morality:

We cannot remind ourselves too often that the Bible records the gradual education of the children of Israel, and the morality of the Old Testament is a very different thing from that of the Sermon on the Mount. Moreover, the mere fact that her words are recorded in the Bible does not prove that Deborah's judgment was true even at the time...

Many years ago the Archbishop of Canterbury wrote an article in a very famous volume of essays, called 'Essays and Reviews', on account of which people thought he was not fit to be a Bishop. I daresay some of the other essays were untrue and dangerous to the Christian faith, but the main point of Dr. Temple's essay - namely, that the Old Testament reveals a gradual and progressive standard of morals - is accepted now by all intelligent Christians, and the Archbishop is recognised as one of the wisest and best of men.¹⁹⁵

Evaluating the Impact of Biblical Criticism upon Religious Education

The extent to which these suggestions were heeded by teachers and headmasters is difficult to assess. Certainly

the attempts to introduce the teachers themselves to the higher criticism and to help them to communicate this body of knowledge to young people were numerous and widespread. It is certain that the attitude of a very substantial portion of people towards the Bible had been transformed by the first decade of the twentieth century. The home training of children was consequently affected in many cases as well as the training of teachers. One must however weigh against these changes factors in the nature of the educational system and in the critical approach to the Bible which most probably retarded the assimilation of modern critical views into the school syllabuses and classroom.

The syllabuses of 1905 and 1906, both those of denominational and Board schools, do not in fact reveal an awareness of the new thinking on the teaching of the Bible. As has been noted above, the syllabuses concentrated on the narrative portions of the Old Testament with no direction to teachers as to how they were to be approached. In 1906 A.F. Mitchell wrote that the order of the biblical material studied, both in terms of importance and time allotted, had not changed for three hundred years. The "age of the reference Bible" and its body of Divinity still prevailed. The youngest school children were taught Genesis and an exact knowledge of Abraham; Sunday schools spent endless hours on lessons from Genesis 1 to Judges 7.¹⁹⁶ The prophets continued to be ignored apart from a few familiar chapters from

Isaiah, even in the advanced classes. The avoidance of morally questionable stories was not practiced, as the events of Joshua and Judges were almost universally recommended. Hayward went so far as to term the syllabuses of these years "monstrosities" in his book on reforming biblical education.

Several factors worked against the introduction of more liberal views on the Bible into the classroom. One major obstacle was the difficulty of teaching and examining the "edifying truth" emphasized by the critical approach as opposed to the "factual truth" of tradition. The problem of teaching religious and moral precepts as discussed above undoubtedly drew more heavily upon the resources of the teacher than the teaching of dates and geographical facts. A discussion for example on, "What is meant by saying that man is made in the image of God?" or on, "The writers of the Bible were God's penmen but not his pens" certainly demanded more of the teacher than a lesson on the order of creation.¹⁹⁷ One educator suggested that those teachers who continued to confine their instruction to information such as "the children of Benjamin were Huppin, Muppin and Ard" did so as a refuge from the more difficult task of teaching spiritual truth.¹⁹⁸ The teachers in secondary schools, observed Miss Bramston, were perplexed about the Old Testament. They felt that traditional views were being contradicted by modern research, yet they did not want to upset parents or disturb the faith of pupils. Some consequently

ignored the Old Testament altogether while more ignored the results of the higher criticism.

The approach stressing moral and religious truth generally disregarded the problem of whether or not a narrative was historically and literally true. Yet to say that the truth "did not matter" was, to many, to turn a blind eye to both the nature of the child's mind and the wishes of strong pressure groups outside of the schools. Children were inevitably concerned to know if a story was "true" in the sense in which they best understood truth: in terms of concrete facts and events. If a teacher openly denied this interpretation of the truth, he opted for one solution. It was however neither recommended by the educators of the day nor encouraged by public opinion. If a teacher said nothing, he could only hope that the edifying truth wrapped up in the story and taught in the classroom penetrated the mind of the child. This was a difficult task both for teacher and pupil, and those supporting modern biblical instruction did give it some though not enough attention. Arthur Garvie, in a pamphlet on religious education, recognized that, "This is so difficult and delicate a task that it demands not only knowledge of modern scholarship, but a spiritual discernment and moral insight which can separate kernel and husk, the these only a deep religious experience and a strong moral character can give."¹⁹⁹

The Bible could no longer be viewed as externally authoritative over every detail of the believer's life; developing

in young people the guiding nature of the Scriptures as the internal grounds for belief in inspiration was no easy task:

How can we best replace the old theory of verbal inspiration, by the realisation of the deeper, more Divine theory of Inspiration which has been shown to our generation? 'Verbal inspiration' carried with it (by implication) a belief that every text held marching orders for the reader. It is no easy matter to replace this belief for the young (or even for ourselves) by a deeper sense of the Bible's guidance in Spirit and Principle. To rise from a life of Rules to a life of Principles means a progress as hard as it is high.²⁰⁰

If teachers were to adopt the solution of stating that certain narratives were not "true" in the traditional way, they would also face a great deal of opposition from both their own colleagues and their superiors. Though many may have sympathized with the higher criticism in private, their public views as teachers or School Board members were necessarily more cautious. If any teacher, it was claimed, dared to treat the stories of the patriarchs as modern criticism did, the debates of the local authority would have made scandalous news. The public in general feared the teaching of modern views on the Bible: "We pay our rates and taxes...to have the Bible taught in its simplicity as the Word of God. It would be an outrage on our conscience if teachers were allowed to teach it as a human book."²⁰¹

Neither were the secularists satisfied with the via media of religious and moral teaching. They claimed that silence on the matter of historicity implied conventional

thinking on the Bible. Children would continue to believe, in their childish ways, that the Genesis tales were historically and literally true. Teachers surrendered their self-respect and battled with their consciences in the knowledge that their treatment of Bible stories was being received by pupils in a way which was contrary to their own beliefs.²⁰² Ratepayers who subscribed to some form of rationalism also claimed to have a grievance against the existing system: "We protest against being made to pay for such sacrilege. Indeed, the wrong done to conscience in our case is much more offensive than anything that could be alleged by our predecessors under church rates..."²⁰³

The problem was compounded by the fact that not only were spiritual truths difficult to teach; they were also difficult to define. Especially with regards to religious education, there was a great deal of talk about the "fundamentals" of the Christian faith, about the edifying "truths" underlying the dubious historical narratives of the Bible. It was true of course that books such as Miss Bramston's Dawn of Revelation or Miss Houghton's Telling Bible Stories outlined the spiritual lessons to be emphasized with children. What teachers, and especially those responsible for denominational teaching, sought however were some clear answers on what had to be believed to be a Christian. Though the union between criticism and faith had been convincing enough in the college, in lecture halls and in popular

journals, many teachers still looked for more official direction from the churches. Arthur Benson at Eton saw the need for some definite pronouncement from the Church of England on how the Old Testament should be studied:

"If some leading prelate or high ecclesiastic of unimpeachable orthodoxy would but state in a little book, frankly and without reserve, what is essential to Christian faith to hold with regard to the Old Testament...it would be an immense relief to hundreds of very earnest schoolmasters."²⁰⁴ Clerical debates, he claimed, were held on all manner of social problems, but not on such a vital matter as biblical criticism.

G.C. Bell also pointed out that when a large number of able and conscientious people combine to follow a course which is not the best possible, there must be some strong reasons for their action. They were obviously influenced by the difficulty of effectively teaching moral and religious truths to young people in specified lesson hours.²⁰⁵ Many churchmen and educators were aware that improved religious instruction could only be given if the time allotted to such an enterprise was increased. Very little of what was theological or spiritual could be taught, "partly because the heavy syllabus, which 'red tape' demanded should be got through, took up nearly all the time in learning the facts."²⁰⁶ To the secularist the time would be best spent on spelling or on arithmetic or on the technical studies that would enhance Britain's position in the world of commerce.²⁰⁷ Yet, it was actual

teaching that was called for if the gains of modern study were to be shared. The sermon was of relatively limited use in this area, and Sunday schools did not possess adequately trained staff or sufficiently long lesson periods to cover the essential material. The classroom appeared to be the most strategic place to deal with the difficulties of the Bible and to plan a defensive against the onslaught of skepticism.

Another major difficulty for teachers was simply in keeping abreast of the latest thought and discoveries in the rapidly changing area of biblical scholarship. It took an enormous amount of enthusiasm and energy to depart from the usual diet of books such as Geikie's The Holy Land and the Bible in order to consult the experts and assimilate their research into syllabuses for the day school.²⁰⁸ Helena Powell recognized this problem in her address on "Scripture Teaching in Girls' Schools":

Even in this exceptional opportunity for biblical study, how impossible most of us are finding it to keep up in reading and thought with the teaching we are having. In the press of school work it is so easy to give up altogether, and, because we cannot do much, refuse to do that little that we can.²⁰⁹

The influence of examinations on religious teaching also impeded the introduction of more liberal views on the Bible. T.C. Raymont claimed that, "In no branch of school instruction have unwisely conducted examinations had more disastrous results than in the teaching of the

Bible."²¹⁰ Many teachers, after study on their own, would wish to inform older pupils about the morality, theology and composition of the Old Testament. Such teaching would be of the highest value to pupils, but it was less suitable for reproduction on paper, and for testing by marks, than questions on history and geography. Classes taught along such lines would certainly be at a disadvantage in most examinations, and the reputation of the teacher would suffer. Most examinations in divinity contained an undue proportion of "dry bones" - of questions on unimportant names and insignificant details of history such as, "Who were the Emins? the Zuzims? and the Zamzummins?"²¹¹ One educator pointed out that,

The questions set are usually of a nature to demand mere textual knowledge, or at best a knowledge of the Scripture history of certain well-known and carefully chosen periods. It would surprise me very much to find a question in a Cambridge examination paper which dealt with the history of the Bible itself, or one which demanded any appreciation of its poetic character, or even a simple knowledge of the conditions under which the various parts were written.²¹²

This difficulty was aggravated by the fact that many popular textbooks on the Old Testament were seriously defective, at least partly because the authors had kept in mind the requirements for examinations when preparing them. The manuals gave full and interesting explanations and illustrations of the history, customs and geography of the Bible, but the religious and moral truths were either ignored or assumed. Bell summarized the situation

with the comment:

The majority of teachers, guided by the textbook and anxious about the examinations, are content if their pupils can reproduce the facts of Bible narratives with the illustrations from history, geography etc. while the examiner thinks he is bound to limit his questions by the range of ordinary textbooks. Thus, writer, teacher, examiner, each influenced by and influencing the others form a kind of "triple alliance" for excluding from the teaching of the Old Testament just that which is most essential to it.²¹³

The literary approach to the Bible specifically posed problems for teachers and churchmen alike. Central to this approach was the view that the Bible should be presented to children like any other book. One read the Bible first as literature; the spiritual insights as well as some knowledge of the factual contents followed. This point was disputed by progressive and conventional church leaders alike. Canon R.H. Kennett for example claimed that when a boy was made familiar with a book of the Bible printed with notes and bound as an ordinary school textbook, it virtually ceased to be to him a part of the Bible. "He puts it away, just as he puts away his school editions of Caesar or Xenophon; and, if he thinks of it at all, he is disposed to ask contemptuously how people could ever have imagined such a book to be of any religious value."²¹⁴

It was suggested in one work on the Bible in the school that the voluntary Sunday school teacher, under no pressure from headmaster or rate payer, could in fact provide an atmosphere in which the new criticism could

flourish.²¹⁵ The Sunday school could of course be a bastion of orthodoxy; it could also, however, under the guidance of a liberal pastor, be a place in which the higher criticism was regarded and taught as a gift from God. And there were some indications that biblical criticism was making an impact upon the lessons taught in the church schools. The Sunday School Helper was a periodical published by the Sunday School Association to supply the educational needs of Unitarians and other Free Christians. "The Sunday School Helper is sent forth in the faith and hope that it will meet the requirements of a large number of parents and teachers who could not conscientiously use the materials placed at their disposal in orthodox publications."²¹⁶ It included articles such as that on, "How the Old Testament Grew," explicitly presenting the conclusions of the critics to Sunday scholars. The article began by getting people to analyze a composite account of the history of England, and then moved them on to the familiar story of Joseph:

You all know the story of Joseph. Without looking at your Bibles, say which of his brothers it was that persuaded the others to kill him. Was it Reuben or Judah? Did they desert Joseph, or did they sell him? Was it the Midianites or the Ishmaelites that took him to Egypt? Now look at Genesis xxxvii, especially from verse 21 to the end. You will soon see that there are two stories.²¹⁷

It is not surprising that Unitarians would be prepared to teach their children, in Sunday school, the basic mysteries of biblical criticism. Yet changes in attitude and procedure also came about in the Sunday

schools of the more conservative churches. Much of the popular material printed for day schools was equally suitable for the Sunday school and Bible class teacher. In 1887 P.T. Forsyth urged that the Sunday schools recover their status by directly confronting the intellectual difficulties of the day. The new scholarship had left teachers in a "rich and happy position"; it had made the Bible come alive, and had recovered the timeless social message of the prophets.²¹⁸

The work of A.S. Peake particularly was concerned with the assimilation of a moderate criticism into the biblical instruction of Sunday schools. In 1905 Peake contributed a series of nine articles to The Primitive Methodist Leader, which were later published as a book entitled Reform in Sunday School Teaching. In it Peake advised that while teachers should not expect to turn out juvenile experts in biblical criticism, "it ought not to be too difficult to give our young people some conception of the way in which the wonderful literature that we call the Bible has come into existence; it may be little more than a bare outline, it need not be too critical, but the assured results ought not to be ignored..."²¹⁹ Indeed, Sunday school teaching should find a place for those results on which the biblical scholars were unanimous, including the idea of progressive revelation, the chronological arrangement of the documents in the Pentateuch, and the development of the religion of Israel. Peake went on to make constructive

suggestions as to what might be done with the various age groups in the Sunday school, always with a view to teaching only that material which would not conflict with critical opinions developed later in life.

The reform of Sunday schools was indeed one of the "ruling ideas" of churchmen in the first decade of the twentieth century.²²⁰ Attendance, especially in the senior classes, was dropping; many of the faithful believed that something was wrong, and so began to question and revise teaching methods and curriculum. The reform of the Sunday schools was the focus of an intense discussion at a Conference of Experts and Biblical Scholars held in London in 1906. One of the major factors responsible for the Conference, sponsored by the Sunday School Union, was the widespread agitation for graded lessons which recognized the psychological principle that children of different ages need different lesson contents as well as different methods of presentation. Also there was the realization that Sunday school teachers had to face up to higher criticism. A significant number of senior pupils were coming into contact with criticism through the press and the works of liberal churchmen. Also, as it was pointed out at the Conference, the International Lesson scheme for 1907 began with Genesis, making a pressing issue of whether or not teachers could afford to exclude the results of higher criticism in senior classes.²²¹ It had become necessary to define clearly what was to be the attitude of teachers to the

critical movement, and to give every possible help to the church in its encounter with unbelief and doubt.

A paper on "Modern Biblical Criticism and its Bearing upon the Sunday School", with special reference to the Old Testament, was given by James Orr and followed by a discussion.²²² While denouncing the effects of higher criticism on the study of the New Testament, Orr was prepared to admit that certain results of Old Testament criticism could be safely taught to the more advanced pupils. Older children were reading and thinking for themselves, and more harm would come eventually from their ignorance than from having the critical conclusions intelligently and reverently explained to them. Orr was intent upon preserving a belief in the Resurrection and in miracles; so long however as a pupil or teacher could assent to them, there was little danger in denying the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch or the unity of Isaiah.²²³

In the discussion which followed, opinions on teaching higher criticism in Sunday schools varied considerably. There were a number of participants who agreed with the Member of Parliament George White in asserting that the higher criticism was best avoided by teachers, although White claimed that they should take a "rational" approach to inspiration and the main objectives of the biblical narratives. It was A.S. Peake primarily who argued that the Bible had to be taught on principles allowing eventually for the assimilation of critical results. The question of biblical origins had to be considered, even

in the Sunday school. Peake's testimony was unshakable: "Nothing that I have ever read or written with reference to criticism in any way goes against my own conviction of the unspeakable religious value of both the Old and New Testament and my belief that the more the knowledge of both can be acquired, the greater will be the value for the children in our Sunday schools."²²⁴ Though no official manifesto on the higher criticism was issued, the chronicler of the event, Frank Johnson, claimed that the work of biblical criticism was recognized as inevitable, and that its assured results were felt to be in no way subversive to the evangelical truths which the Sunday school hoped to teach:

It was affirmed to be the teacher's duty to acquaint himself with these results and to have them in his mind when teaching; but since they do not in themselves constitute a message nor affect the substance of the Gospel, they do not come within the scope of the teaching functions of the school. A knowledge of the critical processes and results will be found of service in senior classes, and there chiefly to answer the difficulties that thoughtful young people meet as intelligence expands.²²⁵

Dominating the Sunday school curriculum at the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth was the International Lesson System, designed in 1872 to insure the direct study of the Bible by providing passages, "Golden texts", and themes for each Sunday in the year. The supply of lesson helps was provided by denominational and individual enterprise. After over three decades of use in the United States and Britain however

the lessons were subjected to intense criticism. Concerns such as those expressed at the Conference of Experts and Biblical Scholars were repeated with increasing vigor, as those who wished to reform the Sunday school saw as their main target the reform of the popular lesson scheme. The final outcome was the implementation of certain changes favorable to modern biblical instruction as well as modern psychology within the policy of the British Section of the Committee.

The May meetings of the Sunday School Union in 1906, the organization's 103rd anniversary, included a major discussion on the International Lesson scheme as well as on the whole problem of teaching the Bible in general. Significantly, one of the keynote speakers declared with regards to biblical criticism that while in some respects it had made the Bible a more human book, it had certainly not lessened the divine nature of the book. He urged the younger teachers in the audience to study the Bible in earnest, using aids such as George Adam Smith's Isaiah or his Minor Prophets.²²⁶ Also sympathetic to the new views on the Bible were the critics of the International Lesson System, A.S. Peake and S.W. Green. Green complained that the system failed to use the Bible with an intelligent awareness of what the Bible was, and also to further the best results of biblical scholarship. Both speakers agreed that the "snippity" treatment of the Bible did not give young people the knowledge necessary to combat skepticism.

"One Sunday they were in the Garden of Eden, and there they left the man and his wife awaiting their doom; the next Sunday they were with Noah and his ark without any explanation as to who he was or how he got there..."²²⁷

Also the prophets and the Psalms were virtually ignored, whereas a very valuable study on someone like Jeremiah, relating him to a certain period in history with certain social conditions, could be the lesson.

The criticisms of the Union conferences did not go unheeded. Early in 1907, the British section elected to its numbers the distinguished educator A.E. Garvie and the outstanding biblical scholars A.S. Peake and W.F. Adeney. The addition of these men "transformed the British Section from a very conservative body into an exceedingly liberal committee. The British Section suddenly became advanced in its attitude towards Biblical Criticism, pedagogy and other related questions."²²⁸ At the London conference of the British and American Sections later in the year, a series of statements and resolutions embodying the concerns of the British Section reflected an awareness of modern biblical scholarship and psychology. The Section suggested, with the ultimate concurrence of the entire conference, that:

The first draft of each cycle of lessons should be prepared by Biblical Scholars, and then be submitted to experts in Sunday School work.

In the compilation of such lessons the progress of Divine Revelation should be kept in view though not expressly marked out.

Opportunities should be afforded for the consecutive study of (a) separate Books and (b) definite periods of Sacred History.

Further use may be made of the Poetical and Prophetical books of the Old Testament, and of the Epistles of the New Testament, in illustration of the contemporary history and its teaching.²²⁹

The lesson cycle for 1912-1917, drawn up for use in Britain and America by the British Section, reflected in part some of the conference's opinions. In 1915 for example A.S. Peake had arranged for a complementary study of the prophets along with Judges through I Kings. A similar program was scheduled for July through December, 1917, in conjunction with I Kings, Ezra and Nehemiah.

In 1915 an Encyclopedia of Religious Education presenting a comprehensive survey of all phases of religious education both in Britain and the United States was published. It is significant that the editors and contributors saw fit to welcome the results of the moderate critics both in teacher training and in the classroom. It was claimed in one article that there was no longer any question with reference to the most profitable method of biblical instruction. The older allegoristic and harmonistic methods had to be set aside. It was now generally agreed that the Bible was to be studied like any other book, an approach resulting in the modification of certain traditional views as to the origin of the Bible. How extensive this modification was to be remained a question; there were however some

commonly accepted conclusions which the Sunday school teacher must heed. To the question of, "How far may the methods and results of Biblical Criticism be utilized in the work of the Sunday school?" it was answered:

An attitude of hostility on the part of the Sunday school teacher towards modern biblical scholarship is wholly unwarranted and to be deeply deplored. Such an attitude arrays the intelligence of the day against the Christian faith and awakens among the uninformed needless fear. That there is no necessary disharmony between the modern view of the Bible and a vital Christian piety has been demonstrated beyond all reasonable doubt by the experience of the past half century.²³⁰

Sunday school teachers were encouraged, as were those in day schools, to stress the religious teaching of the passage under consideration, to view the Bible against a background of heathenism, and to bear in mind the fact that very different ideas of authorship and very different methods of literary composition prevailed among ancient Oriental peoples. If such general principles were mastered and practiced, it was claimed, there was "no reason why modern scholarship should not prove an important ally of the Sunday School."²³¹

This is not to say that Craddock-Watson's idea of improved Bible teaching prevailed in even most of the Sunday schools by 1914. Clergymen who boasted that in their Sunday schools there were some "little ones under five who could tell me the names of the first three kings of Israel and how long they reigned" were not uncommon.²³² Aside from the appeal of traditional "bibliolatry", those

who looked to the Sunday schools for advances in biblical instruction found their programs falling behind those of the day schools. What the Sunday schools had the freedom to teach, the day schools could teach more effectively. After 1870 the Sunday school generally lost its role as educator in other disciplines besides religion, and fell into a period of slow decline. The training of teachers, if it existed at all, was inadequate when compared with the standards established by professional teacher training colleges.²³³ Progressive Bible teaching however demanded study and thorough preparation on the part of the teacher.

On a more positive note, it may be said that the growing body of printed resources for educational purposes helped critical thinking about the Bible to penetrate the classroom. The number of publications dealing with or affected by biblical scholarship which were aimed at young people and teachers increased dramatically after 1890. The teacher training which was provided in the latter years of the century continued to improve in quality, and most likely included some awareness of and instruction in changing attitudes towards the Bible.

The home background out of which many children came was at this time being shaped by the new beliefs on the Bible. Most important was the constant emphasis placed on the reconciliation between faith and criticism, seen in so many popular publications. Once it was realized that the Old Testament was enhanced by critical study,

Horton claimed, parents would see it as their duty to begin Bible teaching from a standpoint compatible with criticism.²³⁴ Also important was the growing number of books which presented the generally accepted results of the higher criticism to parents in a distilled form. It was true even after 1900 that a situation of perplexity and confusion persisted in many homes of the faithful, but this was being alleviated gradually. T.C. Fry wrote that, "There are many excellent guides which would help a parent teach the Bible aright, in the light of modern views. Criticism is now constructive; and the unsettled feeling is largely due to ignorance and mental idleness or even indifference."²³⁵

A book designed to give practical help to mothers in the religious instruction of their children at home was written by Elizabeth Barker in 1903. The Religious Instruction of Children at Home called attention to certain books out of which the week-day lessons at home were to be drawn. Significant about the book was the author's willingness to suggest a number of works which propagated a critical view of the Old Testament. Among those recommended were A History of the Hebrew People by Charles F. Kent, Isaiah by George Adam Smith, and The Oracle of God by William Sanday. Also included was Bell's Religious Education in Secondary Schools, of which Miss Barker claimed, "It touches on the higher criticism in a way that should be valuable to mothers".²³⁶

By 1914 the changes which actually occurred in biblical instruction most likely included the widespread teaching

of the view that the Bible was not historically or scientifically infallible, but generally covered nothing more specific. The critical results which were introduced into classrooms were introduced implicitly. A generation of young scholars chattering about "J, E, P and D" is difficult to imagine; what is probable is that more and more young people came to appreciate the Bible for its religious truth and not for its tedious geographical facts or its prophetic puzzles. It is also probable that more and more children were introduced to an intelligent study of the Bible by means of critical notes and edited Testaments. Growing fewer and fewer were the days when Bible study consisted of stringing together meaningless syllables. With commentaries, however conservative, in hand, pupils began to see that here was a book of divine and human origins with a great deal to say about contemporary problems.

The fact that the fruits of German and British scholarship had penetrated even a few books for the young and for the teachers of the young shocked and alarmed many of the orthodox of the day. University and divinity hall discussions were cause enough for concern, but the idea that biblical criticism was so widely understood and accepted as to be taught even in the day school and Sunday school was abhorrent. Henry Wace, Dean of Canterbury, feared that the effect of such criticism upon simple people would be disaster and unbelief:

So long as such views are treated academically, and discussed only among the learned as the tentative views of this or that scholar, there

might not be any great danger to faith;... but if we are to sow these views broadcast among those who have no solid learning or experience to deal with them, we are surely promoting disbelief and irreligion.²³⁷

The popularization program launched by scholars such as Driver and George Adam Smith, and supported by numerous clergymen and educators, was resisted by a zealous attack on the motives, methods and conclusions of the modern biblical scholars.

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